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Criminal proceedings T. J. Blyden
Poems by David Sweetman and George Szirtes
Letters on The Falklands War (Prejudicism and Greek Myth, Defects in Books etc.)
Information please
Autobiography this week's contribution

Coming to terms with the muzhik

John Keep

ROBERTA THOMPSON MANNING
The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government
555pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £41.
0691 053499

A photograph in this volume shows a Russian peasant family sitting down to supper on a summer evening circa 1900. The patriarch sports a fine white beard; the mother wears a karebief tied around her head; and the four children are clearly enjoying their broth, ladled out from a common pot. Yet one of them has a mug and the garden fence is festooned with metal pots. To the keen-eyed social historian these details suggest progress of a kind: craft industries, growing contact with the towns, production for the market, and perhaps class stratification.

How fast was the Russian village changing under "capitalism", and to what effect? Much was written on such topics at the time by Populist and Marxist intellectuals; yet the Russian village kept its secrets hidden from most outsiders. In 1905-6 and again in 1917-18 the normally submissive muzhik rose up in fury. The driving force in both revolutions was the peasants' hunger for land. An almost mystical obsession with the soil impelled these men and women, some of whom were but a generation removed from serfdom, to expel all "non-owners" from the countryside, to seize their holdings and to carve them up among themselves. A similar fate lay in store for their livestock and other moveable goods; the buildings might be put to the torch. These were essentially archaic, spontaneous popular upheavals which owed little to agitation by radical intellectuals. The peasants preserved a healthy scepticism about the socialist's wordy schemes for nationalization or municipalization (Stalin's final solution, enforced collectivization, had not yet been thought of). They saw the traditional family farm as the basis until the new galactic socio-economic order. In the early twentieth century Russian intellectuals, gentry and governments all faced the same problem: how to come to terms with this intractable and potentially devastating primeval force.

Scholars have done much to clarify the issues, and sometimes to obscure

them. In the 1920s the distinguished American historian Gerold T. Robinson ploughed through reams of official papers and also toured the villages talking to peasants who had survived the cataclysm. Today the Soviet authorities would prohibit such direct contact by foreign researchers. But Roberta Thompson Manning has been able to examine holdings in the major Soviet archives, and she has tapped the published records of local

rather with two components of the Imperial establishment: the gentry and the government. We follow their fumbling efforts to devise appropriate agrarian strategies; we watch these partners drift apart under a surge of idealism and then come together again in the grip of a Russian-style grande peur.

Their relations were decided in two main institutional arenas: the zemstvo and then the Duma. The zemstvo was

harassed by officialdom at every turn, soon drifted into opposition.

They were in the main public-spirited landowners, rather self-important men who ruled their rustic bailiwicks in paternalistic fashion. But they were responsive to the needs of their employees, the so-called "third element" of teachers, doctors and other professionals; they absorbed Western liberal ideas; and by the 1890s they began to organize politically. The

Manning breaks new ground by analysing their social background. They were better educated, more cosmopolitan, and had left the state service to farm for profit. In the euphoric years 1902-5, as Nicholas II vacillated and then blundered into the disastrous war with Japan, zemstvo liberals made common cause with radical intellectuals and became spokesmen for the nation. The less cultivated landowners were dragged along behind, as if by inertia. This was an artificial situation and clearly could not last.

In 1905 the empire fell to pieces in the wake of military defeat in the Far East. The towns seethed with discontent. Strikes, protest marches and insurrections followed one another in bewildering succession. By October Nicholas II had to concede the principle of meaningful constitutional government. There was to be a Duma, or parliamentary body, elected indirectly like the zemstvo but on a broadened suffrage. For the next months this prospect embodied the nation's hopes for reform and peaceful progress. The Constitutional Democrats, or Kadets, enjoyed great moral authority and when the Duma met for the first time in April 1906 their deputies controlled the house. There was even talk of a liberal ministry under the Kadet leader, Paul Milyukov. A historic compromise between state and "society" seemed imminent.

This proved to be a mirage. The tension usually given is the obduracy shown by Milyukov, or the Tsar, or both. Manning pinpoints a deeper cause: the swing of grass-roots gentry opinion, which deprived the Kadets of their political base. The binnings and sackings of the "gentlefolk's nests" provoked a sharp reaction among zemstvo men. The conservatives reasserted themselves and many liberals moved to join them. They did not protest when the police arrested zemstvo employees, often on the flimsiest pretexts, or when "insolent" peasants were flogged and their villages destroyed by Cossack troops. Ivan Pétrovich, the founding father of zemstvo liberalism, was one of the landowner victims of peasant violence. Bitter at the senseless ravaging of property, he declared that these guilty of "agrarian crimes" should be excluded from any amnesty granted by the Tsar. Many right-wingers went further than this. The Tula zemstvo



A meeting of village elders, 1910, from Russian original photographs 1860-1920 by Marvin Lyons (212pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £6.95, 0 7100 9243 1).

agencies more thoroughly than anyone hitherto. Her book deserves to stand alongside Robinson's classic, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*. Both works succeed in translating cold statistical data into human terms; both place social movements firmly in their overall political context - a rare virtue in these days of quantitative history. Manning has little to say about the revolutionaries. She is concerned

with the "hybrid" of a local government reform of 1864 had set up provincial and county councils responsible to the central authorities for such matters as education, health, roads and agricultural improvement. But their members were elected, if only indirectly, and so in some measure represented rural "society" in its dealings with the absolutist state. The zemstvo men, starved of funds and

resolutions passed at their semi-legal gatherings were couched in deferential terminology; yet they reflected a worthy determination to resist arbitrary rule and to promote respect for popular rights. At a time when liberalism was in general decline elsewhere in Europe it blossomed belatedly in Russia; and the gentry, formerly the bulwark of autocracy, took the lead.

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Children of the universe

Peter Redgrove

RICHARD PERCEVAL GRAVES

The Brothers Powys
370pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£14.95.
0710093233

C. A. COATES

John Cowper Powys in Search of a Landscape
191pp. Macmillan. £20.
033324765

LLEWELYN POWYS

Black Laughter
222pp. Bristol: Redcliffe. £5.95.
0 905459 54 7

The occult or magical life, the life lived according to "a reality behind the veil", the Romantic or symbolic life, gets an exceedingly bad press in the serious journals of our age. It is the positivistic spirit that has prevailed, which claims that the surface reality apparent to our conscious senses is all that matters, and that there are no "unconscious" senses at all, through which the unseen influences the seen. It has been difficult for scholars to accept that the magical view of life of so great a writer as W. B. Yeats was not just an aberration but his very core; and it is likely that the paganism of the brothers Powys has not helped them towards the wide acceptance which is their right. *Rats in the Sack* was the name Llewelyn Powys gave to his book of essays about men whose thought was profoundly non-Christian.

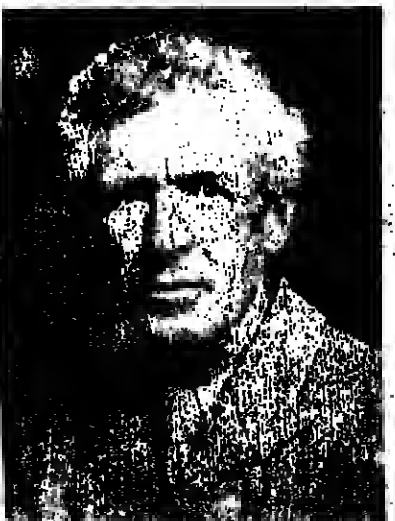
Though all John Cowper Powys's masterpieces (which I take to be *Wolf Solent*, *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Weymouth Sands* and *Maiden Castle*) are in print, and T. F. Powys's great *Mr Weston's Good Wife* is available, nothing else of the latter's is, except *Mr Tasker's Gods* (in a large print edition, oddly enough). Llewelyn Powys's *Black Laughter*, has just been re-issued; *Ebony and Ivory*, also about Africa, is to be re-issued next year. Five of his other books are still in print. This is still comparative neglect. What a film Polanski would have made of *Maiden Castle* (instead of *Tess*). Theodore's remarkable "black comedies" antedate those of Beckett or Pinter, and in my opinion are superior to them, having greater moral concern and deeper humour. As well as the three great brother-artists, there are two sisters of particular note: Gertrude, whose paintings must still be somewhere; and Katie, who was a beautiful woman of early twentieth-century village life. *The Blackhorse Winter*, ought to be re-issued.

Richard Perceval Graves's *The Brothers Powys*, though it is a family biography, naturally emphasizes the three brothers of enduring reputation. It is a remarkable story of innocence and energy. I use the word "innocence" in contradistinction to "corruption" rather than "experience". After all, to those who believe in the magical world, every human being is a child of the universe, and an important part of it, while the positivists regard human consciousness as a kind of accident, or at most an epiphenomenon, on the level of the brain. The first is why one might call the "vertical correspondence" (as above, so below) which I have just mentioned, and the second the "horizontal correspondence" which are much more familiar but seemingly more rare: just as to J. C. Powys the universe was a living organism, shot through with magical and ambiguous, but still meaningful personal energies, so all the eleven siblings lived in relationships of love and concern for each other and for those who came in contact with the family, in a manner that must be rare anywhere, let alone among literary or artistic people.

J. C. Powys was the eldest child of the Revd Charles Powys and Mary Cowper Johnson. He was sensitive and imaginative from the earliest age, and a ready target for the contradictory morality of his father's asceticism and Christianity, and thus a fully prepared candidate for conjectures and experiences beyond it. The child

protected himself, as such children often do, with magical fantasies and rituals. "I am the Lord of Hosts!" he once triumphantly announced to the astonished nursemaid who was pushing his baby brother Littleton in the pram down the lane that led to his father's church.

The effect of one incident with his father persisted to the end of his days. John had been indulging "the most wicked pleasure known to me, of transferring tadpoles from the pond in the field to the puddles left by the rain at the side of the drive". Charles Powys was shocked by this brutality. The parson took John, aged three, to where he had been chopping down some laurels, "moved by a natural desire that his son should behold these deeds of devastation and glory in his begetter's skill and strength". Then the father gave the son a present which he had carved himself from the laurel wood: it was an axe. In Graves's words, it was an axe. In Graves's words, it was an axe. In Graves's words, it was an axe.



Llewelyn Powys

own violence, and then had given him a weapon for further destruction". R. D. Laing might describe this as a "schizo-phrenogenic" act. It gave the child a feeling for the contradictions of cruelty in the world, and when in one of his books he saw a picture of an eagle seizing a lamb, "John became thrilled by a sadistic feeling. . . . Excited by these images, he developed 'the habit by night of making my little cot shake with the feverish intensity of my infantile eroticism'".

Childhood punishment "did not deter John from the fantasies he enjoyed each night, in which he was in control of a world which normally frightened him. . . . These acts of 'magical' masturbation' remained essential to him all his life, and seemed part of his imaginative gift. At seventeen John was creating in *Porius* an adult version of the endless fairy tale with which his father had entertained him in his childhood, and the amell of the giants in the novel reminds *Porius* of the smell of the tadpoles, which he had carried to certain wayside puddles at the foot of the Gaer".

It appears that an interest in the byways of sex was essential to all the three, John most of all. He said "Nature puts her seal on what is best for each of us by the mystery of happiness that such things bring." It is as though conventional norms were as much a part of the magical universe as the conventional mind turn away from these ideas. Yet one can compare the descriptions of sexual relationships in, say, *A Glastonbury Romance* very favourably with those of a much more widely esteemed prophet of sex, D. H. Lawrence. In my opinion, J. C. Powys has the wider mind and truer senses and deeper sympathies with both sexes, and also knows how to use humour, which is rare in Lawrence.

All three of the brothers were intensely erotic (with Theodore it was a kind of love-death, and this went into his writing) and regarded sexuality as a means of revelation. A sensation was a starting-point for John: "Every flower is alive as we are", and was an entry into magic, which was a mysticism of Nature. Llewelyn remarked "How continually one learns people say you make too much of sex." It is the backbone of all life. "And John in *Weymouth Sands* writes that one can "fumble and probe

towards the world's mystery through the more receptive souls of women". John believed in a golden age of an "anarchical patriarchy" and Llewelyn that "the poetry of nature might well include pages of detailed erotic fantasy". It is possible to imagine that these highly sexed siblings, and possibly the whole family of brothers and sisters, became as united as they were in a state of defence within the "enormous emotional and magnetic explosiveness, held rigidly under an almost military control" of their Reverend Father. Perhaps it was as John wrote in *Owen Glendower*: "It is the romance of heroic and hopeless rebellion. . . . Such a rebellion is full of an occult significance".

However, Charles Powys's simple, unshakable religious opinions acted on, for example, Littleton, quite differently, and he became a headmaster, not an artist; Bertie became an architect. There was no trace of resentment on either side of these differing ways of life; between



Theodore Powys

the siblings all seem mutual love and esteem, right to the last. The mother, Mary, was "formidable too", and adapted to her husband's "sadistic" religion with an almost "masochistic" fit, and Llewelyn at least seemed to hate her. He described her as "that strange woman who ever loomed sorrow rather than joy". When it was understood that he had consummated "I know the resentment my going to Switzerland and would have had me instead return quietly to Montacute to die peacefully there clinging to the Christian hope." Yet when they were children he gathered them around her to read the Bible and other stories, and this seems to have been part of the magic too.

A sorrow in John's life was that he married a woman who in temperament seemed to resemble his mother; yet all his life, even in penury, he regarded housing and feeding her as one of his chief responsibilities. This was so too with other women he adored, such as

Frances Wilkinson. The three brothers shared an *annus mirabilis* (1921-22) when they each found the woman who was to encourage and influence their writing decisively. With John, this was Phyllis Playter, with whom he was to live for the rest of his life; Llewelyn in America fell in love with Alyse Gregory, also an author, who long survived him, but who in her eighty-fourth year lay down on his cloak to die after taking an overdose; and Theodore in England met Sylvia Townsend Warner, and this was a turning-point for him. Despite his loving and working partnership with Alyse Gregory, Llewelyn's relationships to women were extremely varied and almost continuous; he led a contradictory life of extreme ill-health and what an unsympathetic observer would call vigorous lechery.

It was the Powys brothers' eroticism again, and sexuality is another matter that gets a bad press; often in human relationships extreme eroticism is



John Cowper Powys

aquated with cruelty. With none of them was this so; in this biography one can only find instances of care and concern in their relationships with women, though admittedly Llewelyn could have been more observant of Alyse's suffering behind her loving reassurances. In John's case one can imagine that this was because he had mastered his "sadistic images", and so did not need to practise cruelty, indeed by a beneficent magic he seemed to have turned these energies into love and personal magnetism. Llewelyn had this magnetism also, to the end; Ethel Mannin said when she visited him during his last illness, "I have never known such charm. . . charm that kindles the senses like sunlight."

I hope I have not suggested that Graves seeks a key to the brothers' achievement in life as in letters. It is a biography pure and simple, and a good one, with an eye for the significant story; a well-arranged book with a good index and useful summarizing

Against Dullness

Clouds harbour no cuckoo-land,
preferring that that wraps up night
like an expected gift.
The chair spins round: a dark upland
by schizophrenia comes adrift
and drifts down out of sleep.

I thought you were sitting there,
your hair still dripping from the rain
that lately caught you out.
Tired, you slumped into the chair
and shade and water burned a stain
across the collar of your coat.

Water whispers, makes a dull
provincial scene, and such things may
depress us, being true.
The darkness of the chair was all
that kept the provinces at bay,
half hiding, half displaying you.

Titillations we survive,
and rain too, with its gifts of fur
and darkness within its face.
There's little we ourselves can give
but that which loves both rain and fear
and lives in any place.

George Szirtes

Amleth, prince of Jutland

H. R. Ellis Davidson

William F. Hansen (Editor)
Saxo Grammaticus and the Life of
Hamlet
202pp. University of Nebraska Press.
£12.25.
0 8032 2318 8

"One might have said he was Superogatory. Had he not mentioned the Hamlet Affair." So wrote James Michie of Saxo in a *New Superogatory* competition. This book is concerned with the Hamlet Affair in Saxo's Latin History of Denmark, written in the early years of the thirteenth century, and so revives a subject somewhat neglected by scholars of recent years. It certainly deserves revival, for the tale of Hamlet's Danish predecessor Amleth is one to awaken curiosity in any lively mind. Saxo presents it as the story of a minor king in Jutland, and this is the earliest version of the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark. Here already we have the wicked uncle and the threatened nephew, playing the fool while seeking vengeance; here too is the girl by whom the hero is attracted, but whom he never marries, his ruthless murder of a spy, bitter reproaches to his faithless mother, a voyage intended to end in his death but which, he turns to his advantage, his return home to a funeral ceremony (although in Saxo this is Amleth's own), and the final

achievement of his revenge, in which many perils beside his uncle. Only the ghost and the travelling players are missing (and both may be found in other tales in Saxo's early books). The major difference is that vengeance in Saxo does not cost the hero his life, but wins him the kingdom, together with outstanding praise such as Saxo gives to no other hero.

We are tantalized by the question of whether Shakespeare ever read Saxo in the original, or made do with a summary or translation. The English version of Belleforest, often assumed to have been his source, did not appear until 1608, although he may have seen the French original. Some scholars, including Dover Wilson, thought they discerned echoes of Saxo's Latin in lines of Shakespeare; for instance Amleth's words to his mother: *Cetera sile* might conceivably have suggested Hamlet's last words: "The rest is silence." There seems no conclusive answer to the problem, since the earlier play on Hamlet's revenge, performed in 1589, is lost. But it is certainly worth while to go beyond Belleforest's narrative to the brilliant, exciting tale in Saxo, which has a driving force setting it apart from other tales of vengeance against an usurping uncle in Icelandic literature, discussed by William F. Hansen. The trickster character of Amleth, and his subtle play on words - very popular in medieval Scandinavia and Iceland, but difficult for Saxo to get across in Latin - and his outwitting of a savage, sinister and rather stupid court, come across with convincing effect. Particularly powerful are his merciless actions,

cutting up the spy's body, boiling it, and sending it down a sewer as food for the pigs outside, and fastening down the king's drunken body-guard with lengths of tapestry before setting fire to the hall in his final act of vengeance. It is perhaps a little blurred in this new translation, precise but somewhat lifeless, with none of Saxo's touches of erratic brilliance. The rendering of Saxo's description of Amleth as a fool, like "an absurd monster due to a derangement of fate", for example, compares poorly with Elton's "some absurd abortion due to a mad fit of destiny", or Peter Fisher's "a ludicrous freak created by fate in a madcap mood". The continued use of the word "crooks" hardly conveys the idea of the small hooks of wood fastened by Amleth early in the story, and later used to pin down the tapestries to the earthen floor.

However, the commentary and description will be useful to those engaged on this subject in the future, for it is one on which the last word has by no means been said. Some new links are pointed out, such as that between Shakespeare's Fortinbras and Saxo's Vigloek, and also it is argued that the story of Brutus, far from being the possible original of Saxo's tale, is more likely to derive from some early folk-tale from which the Danish story was also taken. There are references to detailed work in Danish unlikely to be familiar to English scholars, and an interesting note on the graves of Hamlet in Denmark, including one created at Elsinore in the nineteenth century as a trap for tourists. Much more might be said on Saxo's use of

popular tradition, not merely in his method of story-telling and arrangement of plot - something difficult to judge objectively - but in the constant use of riddles, word-play and puns. The folk-tale element in the early books of Saxo is something on which a good deal of work has been done; for instance, there is Kenneth Jackson's study of the Irish tale of Connal Cnrc, where a message is conveyed, as in the Amleth story, by means of a shield. The impression throughout is that this one particular tale of Amleth is viewed too much in isolation from the rest of Saxo's legends of early heroes, and from the wider background of Icelandic literature. From this viewpoint, there is nothing surprising about the comparison of a horse with a wolf, which Hansen seems to find perplexing, in one of Amleth's riddling replies. It is commonplace in Norse tradition to portray the wolf as the steed of the trollwoman or giantess, hastening to the battlefield to feast on the slain, an image possibly based on the savage valkyries of early Germanic tradition before they developed into dignified ladies in armour. Possible signs of myth in the Amleth story, suggested by a number of scholars, are not touched on here.

This is a useful though limited book on an important subject, particularly helpful in the discussion of the distribution of tales of the hero who plays the fool to save his life. But the reader must not be led into the assumption that it is only because of his treatment of the Hamlet Affair that Saxo is worth reading.

to be understood as preventative against the plague, along with the other delights which the young people enjoy in their country estates. One of them, Dioneo, explicitly says that they left Florence "to provide for our relaxation in order to preserve our health and our lives." One fifteenth-century plague treatise, *Il Decamerone*, actually recommends the reading of the *Decameron* as a therapeutic measure. It will be evident from this somewhat bizarre example that Olson does not claim that the "secular culture" of which he speaks had developed any conception of literary pleasure as an end in itself. Yet the evidence which he has collected and analysed in this original and wide-ranging study does show how literature was by no means always regarded in purely didactic fashion by medieval readers. They did recognize and think about "the pleasure of the text", even if that pleasure could only be publicly acknowledged as a means to greater efficiency and better health.

On the bright side

J. A. Burrow

Glending Olson
Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages
245pp. Cornell University Press.
£14.75.
0 8014 1394 6

It is sometimes held that medieval thought about literature concentrated exclusively on its didactic function, as if songs, stories and shows were then considered, officially at least, purely in terms of their moral, spiritual, or prudential utility. Glending Olson recalls, however, that Horace's decision in the *Ars Poetica*, much quoted in the Middle Ages, recognized a kind of poetry which served only to delight (*delectare*), as well as the purely didactic and the other sort (best of all which combines both functions by "blending profit with pleasure"). Olson sets out to discover how the literature of delectation, and more generally the idea of literary pleasure itself, came to be considered in the Middle Ages - a period in which, admittedly, moralistic or at least pragmatic theories of literature prevailed. He states his purpose as follows: "I hope essentially to redress an imbalance in modern scholarship that fosters, intentionally or not, the notion that medieval literary thought had nothing but indifference to or contempt for the purely pleasurable."

Olson's phrase "the purely pleasurable" suggests the intriguing possibility that some medieval literary theory might actually believe Paterian than Platonic; but it turns out, disappointingly if not surprisingly, that his authorities all stress the practical utility of literary pleasure. Even the duties of literary pleasure, Olson relates, came to be considered in the Middle Ages - a period in which, admittedly, moralistic or at least pragmatic theories of literature prevailed. He states his purpose as follows: "I hope essentially to redress an imbalance in modern scholarship that fosters, intentionally or not, the notion that medieval literary thought had nothing but indifference to or contempt for the purely pleasurable."

Despite this regrettable self-denying ordinance, however, Olson is still left with a fair amount of material. Among the works he discusses are several French fabliaux, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (where he fails, perhaps to his credit, to suggest that the tales form part of the regimen of a group of convalescents on their way to the shrine of a saint "that heat hath holpen when that they were seke"); and also *Amleth* or *Nicolaus*, while the author claims that "there is no one so perplexed, so grief-stricken, miserable, or beset with illness, who upon hearing it will not be improved in health and cheered up." But Olson's chief example is the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. The prefatory epistle to the

French translation of this work by the humanist Laurent de Premierfait, while stressing the moral benefit to be gained from reading it, nevertheless also provides Olson with "a major statement of the recreational justification of literature."

Olson uses this contemporary testimony to good effect, but he also has a new idea of his own. The *Decameron*, it will be recalled, opens with a vivid description of the plague in Florence, from which the young people escape to tell their tales in the country. Here and in some other works (notably Guillaume de Machaut's *Jugement du Roy de Navarre*) Olson sees a pattern of movement "from plague to pleasure" which he interprets in the light of contemporary plague tracts. These recommend cheerfulness as a preventative against the dreadful disease, and some specify songs and stonies among the recommended means of attaining such cheerfulness. Olson accordingly suggests that the hundred stories of the *Decameron* are

general bibliography on the main topics, giving a more certain lead to further reading, would have been useful. It must also be said that a more consistent approach to the level of the books recommended would have allowed the *Decameron* to be read in spite of these mild strictures. This is a book which professional historians will find useful. It is not everyone who can explain to inquiring students the meaning of *asserting or anuige* in two or three short paragraphs or claim to know the historical basis for such legendary figures as King Arthur, Robin Hood or Dick Whittington, or remember the details of the dietary habits of both rich and poor of the time.

The thirty-two illustrative photographs have been excellently chosen: to include both the south door of the church of Kilpeck, the Beaufort's window of York Minster shows an admirable understanding of the period. There are two appendices and three tables, and the occasional footnote does not interrupt the flow of the text. The eight maps or diagrams provided are both interesting and useful, as long as, again, as one is willing to tolerate the author's idiosyncratic choice.

Aulnage assessed

Brenda Bolton

Nigel Saul
The Batsford Companion to Medieval England
238pp. Batsford. £14.95.
0 7134 1345 X

This *Companion to Medieval England*, although not a book to be read straight through, nevertheless provides a valuable insight to the period. Saul tells us at the outset that his professional interests are rooted in the political and social history of the later Middle Ages and this is apparent in the way the contents are tilted towards this period: the length of entries appears to vary in accordance with his enthusiasm. Nevertheless, Dr Saul has successfully covered many themes: art and architecture, government and literature, people and institutions and many legal, religious and social matters. Technical definitions are suitably brief and many of the general themes are given the longer treatment they deserve. He has kept bibliographical references to a bare minimum and for the shorter entries has omitted them altogether. A

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Unreconciled to history

Cella Hawkesworth

DOBRIČA ĆOSIĆ

Reach to Eternity
Translated by Muriel Heppell
410pp, £8.95,
0 15 175961 8

South to Destiny
Translated by Muriel Heppell
395pp, £11.95,
0 15 184486 0
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Dobrica Ćosić is a controversial figure in Yugoslav public life. Born in 1921, he served with the Partisan forces as a political commissar during the Second World War. After the war, he became a member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, but was expelled in 1968. He was accused then, as he has been on several occasions since, of expressing narrow Serbian nationalist views. In the uneasy community that makes up the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the tensions between a baffling array of nationalist interests are a constant threat to the country's stability. Ćosić has often maintained that he opposes bigoted nationalism, which he sees as an obstacle to genuine socialist progress. However, he can have had few illusions as to the way in which his words would be interpreted by his potential supporters and opponents alike. They earned him a considerable following and at the same time exposed him to attack on the grounds of nationalism – which can be used as a convenient label for an awkward independence of mind. Whatever the truth may be, Ćosić emerges from his many published essays and critical writings as a thinker and critic of great courage. After the death of President Tito in 1980 various attempts were made to increase democratic freedoms in Yugoslavia, including an appeal signed by many intellectuals. Ćosić among them, calling for an amnesty for all political prisoners and for the removal of the main instigators of another proposal to launch a new intellectual journal to be known as *Public Opinion* (*Javnost*).

Throughout Eastern and Central Europe, literature has often functioned as an alternative to official opposition. All of Ćosić's works reflect his vigorous acceptance of this tradition: essays or fiction, they constitute a meditation on the fate of his country and its people, its recent history and the forces shaping its present circumstances. In 1977, Ćosić was elected Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His inaugural speech became the subject of a new campaign against him, although the text of the speech was not published in Yugoslavia until some time later, as a result of pressure exerted by Ćosić on the Academy. Once again the attack was directed against the allegedly nationalist views expressed. The main concern of the speech, however, is with the relationship between literature and history, a theme which also dominates the collection of essays *Power and Foreboding* (*Moć i strepnje*), published in 1972 but immediately withdrawn from circulation. In his speech, Ćosić quotes Camus' perception of the inevitably tragic nature of art in critical moments of human history. He sees the twentieth century as a "driving force" to a new concern with history, presented as an all-powerful force governing their lives in the place of a lost God. The role of literature at such a time is a vital one. By offering a poetic transposition of history, it can revitalize the spiritual life of the people.

Ćosić began to write works of fiction with this in mind. Most of these works have been concerned with the recent past of his native Serbia. Ćosić's first novel, *Far Away is the Sun* (*Daleko je sunce*, 1951), examines the decision-making among the Partisan leaders and their relations with the peasant population during the Second World War. One of the novel's striking features is its concern with the attitudes of division between "people" and "school-fellows" but, now, fighting against each other. For all its weakness as a work of literature, this early novel, published in circumstances of considerable official constraint, clearly

demonstrates Ćosić's readiness to question accepted myth and dogma, and to confront the dilemmas of his time. This stance is still more clearly seen in a second novel about the Second World War, *Divisions* (*Deobe*, 1961). This is an attempt to analyse the mentality of the Chetniks (guerrillas who fought against the Partisans), to examine the complex reasons and emotions that drove them to turn their arms on their fellow Serbs. *Roots* (*Koreni*, 1954), focuses on the crucial years of Serbia's emergence from a patriarchal, agricultural province of the Ottoman Empire, its growth as an independent kingdom and first steps in parliamentary democracy. The novel is spoiled by a florid experimental style which tends to obscure the issues, but it does evoke a strong atmosphere of fear, suspicion and despair.

The next step in Ćosić's exploration of his country's recent past was his study of the First World War in Serbia, published in four volumes as *A Time of Death* (*Vreme smrti*, 1972-79), which takes up the set of characters introduced in *Roots*. The struggle of "little Serbia" against the Habsburg forces, vastly superior in terms both of men and equipment; its unexpected victories in the first year of the war; the way the small country held down a significant section of the enemy armies for a prolonged period; the appalling scale of the losses, not only in battle but through disease; the devastation of the army and civilian population in the great retreat through the mountains of Montenegro and Albania in the winter of 1915, and the regrouping of the army to fight again with the Allies – all of this captured the imagination of governments and peoples alike.

For the English version the work has been slightly condensed into three

volumes, each dealing with a distinct phase of the war and forming a self-contained whole. The first, *A Time of Death*, focuses on one important battle in the winter of 1914. From its initial descriptions of misery and disaster this first volume rises to a dramatic crescendo as the Serbian army inflicts a temporary defeat on the Austro-Hungarian forces, obliging them to retreat from Serbian territory. The second volume concentrates on the full following of this victory, as the enemy forces regroup. Throughout this time, Serbia is ravaged by a typhus epidemic. *Reach to Eternity* is set in a Serbian hospital and describes the battle of its meagre staff to save the wounded and stamp out the disease. The determination of the hospital director against apparently hopeless odds echoes the pattern of battle in the first volume, where the figure of the general fulfils a parallel role of solitary persistence. The third volume, *South to Destiny*, describes the devastating new offensive by the combined Austro-Hungarian, German and Bulgarian armies, and the retreat of the remnant of the Serbian army and thousands of civilian refugees.

To develop his theme Ćosić draws on documents, official despatches, telegrams, newspaper articles, diaries and letters, merging the real and the fictitious. The characters represent a similar blend. The central figures are the family of a fictitious leader of the Opposition. This focal point enables Ćosić to extend his material in two directions to cover the whole spectrum of Serbian society – from the government and army commanders to the life of the village and the fate of its population. The epic scale of the novel is inherent in the broad scope of its material, and in the nature of the

events it describes – the issues of life and death, freedom and survival confronting not only individuals, but an entire nation.

Ćosić's writing reflects a powerful intellect which thrives on debate and the conflict of ideas; his broad perspective enables him to enter into the circumstances and point of view of a great range of characters. And yet to some extent, his work remains on precisely this level: his characters tend to embody a situation or point of view rather than come to life as individuals. The novels are broad and detailed canvases, full of vigour and colour, but flat, with a uniform tone. This tone is curiously archaic in a late twentieth-century writer, leisurely, discursive, and, to readers in the Anglo-Saxon tradition at least, at times over-stated. Regrettably, the subject-matter of the novels also offers scope for Ćosić's tendency to bathos. The translator is faced with a difficult task, as the style does not transfer happily into English. For the British reader there is an additional obstacle as the text has been to a certain extent Americanized by the publisher, although this is not the natural medium of the translator.

Nevertheless, Ćosić's story is powerfully and movingly told, and like all his work is marked by a deep sense of moral responsibility and humanity. The following statement is typical of his standpoint: "A society which does not have a developed conscience, that is, an awareness of values and of injustice, a society which is not distressed by injustice and falsehood, is a society that has no need of freedom, or democracy, or socialism. It is a society reconciled to the evil of life and history." Ćosić refuses to be reconciled.

Un- and other realities

Alex de Jonge

ZINOVY ZINIK

Russkaya Sluzhba
205pp, Paris: Syntaxis, F58

The young Nabokov-Sirin, as he then was, once wrote an article in an émigré journal in which he complained that too much émigré writing was affected by homesick yearning for the rostral columns of Petrograd (*aska po rostral'noy kolonne*). The strength and originality of Zinovy Zinik's novel *Russkaya Sluzhba* lie in its avoidance of émigré clichés, or rather in its exploitation of them. It is an immensely delicate and subtle book that explores the paradoxical nature of emigration, while providing an incident and by highly satisfactory and amusing vignettes of London. The central character strains to interpret his present surroundings in terms of his increasingly misty recollections of the past, with the result that he fails to secure any kind of useful hold upon the reality in which he finds himself, while his memory of things past is shown to be inevitably haphazard and partial.

Any suggestion that the book is dominated by preconceived notions which merely demonstrates would be to miss its essential quality. It is a work of fiction, much more than the sum of its subtleties, not only in its beautifully written, it is also hilarious and strongly moving.

The tone of metaphysical unreality which pervades it is set in the opening scene. Someone is running in front of a crowd, through the snow, carrying a red banner, and being fired at by White Guards. It is only when a voice shouts "but" that we understand that we are in London, where the snow comes out of a refrigerator, and is precious, and that the protagonist is an extra in a film that looks rather like *Reds*. At the end of a day's shooting he has his clothes stolen and is obliged to leave the set in his costume, the outfit of a revolutionary sailor. Thus armed he nearly frightens the British ambassador, who is a Russian lady who once enjoyed the unwelcome attention of a number of sailors from the Kronstadt garrison. In the course of a subsequent conversation, it emerges that the protagonist, Narator,

by name, is almost certainly the victim of a probable Soviet plot, and a likely candidate for the next examination by poisoned umbrella.

Narator, whose hold on reality is slight, counts Gogol's Akaki Akakievich among his ancestors; in the Soviet Union he worked as a clerk specializing in checking departmental documents for typing errors which he would correct with the aid of razor blades and erasers. He left the Soviet Union in order to get to meet the owners of disembodied voices he used to listen to on the radio, the voices emerging from a Russian language broadcasting station located in London. In due course he gets a job at the stolen in question, where life is not easy for him. Not only does he find it difficult to cope with the swing doors in the canteen, he also discovers that radio stations have no need of proof readers. Instead he is asked to correct the pronunciation and accentual patterns of his colleagues who have been away long enough to make mistakes in their Russian. His attentions are unwelcome and he is threatened with dismissal.

This suffices to convince the White Russian lady that the KGB is mounting a plot to thwart his attempts to purify the Russian language; and that he is potentially a hero and avenger martyr. He becomes something of a celebrity, and is even taken up by a lady journalist with a smattering of Russian. He is then taken to a party where he meets a man in a man's world. Anyone unfamiliar with the species would think this character overdone but would be mistaken. She loses interest in him when she discovers that he has no gulag hard labour to tell, and that no one seems to be after him. Then one morning, early on, Chelisea Embankment, someone scratches him with the point of an umbrella and soon after he dies, as the autopsy reveals, of natural causes.

The book blends conspiracy theory and high farce to interweave a whole pattern of differing perceptions and preconceptions of the "Russian language, of the Soviet Union, of English, and above all of London. There is a magnificent and hilarious conversation between two émigrés which is a telling and only slightly parodic evocation of different attitudes to the history of Russia in the twentieth century. The constant use of this kind of gentle exaggeration is an

invitation to seek for "the truth" by reading between these comical and slightly distorted lines. In other words the book constitutes what some would refer to as a text inviting deconstruction and the perception of sub-texts. English and Russian languages confront each other as London is seen through rather dim Soviet eyes and its place names are reformed into their Russian phonetic approximations, which are almost always obscene. At the same time the descriptions of London itself are beautiful. They are highly lyrical, whilst retaining the strangeness of an alien point of view. In this respect they are very like Nabokov's descriptions of Berlin in *The Gift*.

The book also makes farcical use of differences between Russian and English syntax, as Narator wrestles hopelessly with a new tense, the future in the past, to his utter mystification. He also has to wrestle with the little miseries of English life: gas meters, the alarming variety of electric plugs, London houses that consist of nothing but stairs, and the shattering cold and damp of English homes in winter. Any foreigner who has had that experience will sympathize with Narator when he asks an Englishman how to get warm in winter and is told to "go outside".

The novel is also in a modest way a *Bildungsroman*, demonstrating the need to accept the reality of exile and to try to live it through. In this case, the unreal patterns of conspiracy and would-be heroics. The actual nature of Narator's end remains a satisfactorily open question, but the true conclusion of the book is best rendered by the words of Madame Epanchin at the end of *The Idiot*: "And all this, all this abroad, this Europe of yours is nothing but a fantasy, and we, abroad, are all just a fantasy too, remember, mark my words, you'll see."

Fantasy or not, with this book Zinovy Zinik has shown himself to be an author of considerable talent; a stylist with a subtle sense of humour and the ability to make full use of the here-and-beyond the mere recollection of Soviet things past suggests that he will do great credit to Russian émigré literature and will perhaps be mentioned in the same breath as Zinoviev, Volochin, and the incomparable Aleskovsky.

Stopping the clock

George Mikes

SYMÓN SZECHESTER

A Stolen Biography
Translated by Frances Carroll and Nina Karsov
157pp, Nina Karsov, 28 Lancelot Avenue, London NW9,
0 907652 05 0

This is a strange book: social satirical Communist country with a generous dose of fable and fairytale added. Bitterness is mixed with a shrug of the shoulders – well, that's what humans are like: cowardly, naïve, selfish but there is perhaps – perhaps – a bit of good in us too.

The story takes place in an unnamed Communist country, obviously Poland, the author's country of origin. Its three heroes, or anti-heroes, are little Jozek, big Josef and the Child. Little Jozek is simply big Josef as a child; big Josef is little Jozek grown up. They are sometimes opposed, sometimes happily agreeing, but they do not really know each other. (I do not quite see why. The child, of course, cannot know the adult but the grown-up must know, love or hate but at least remember, the child.) Among the child is little Jozek Hirsztel, a son of an antisemitic man who finds out that he is Jewish. He develops into Josef Potoczek, a reasonably well-known and reasonably honest writer. The third main protagonist, the Child, is Party hack, always ready to swallow any insult or ready to betray anyone for some small (or large) advantage.

The story – which is the last important part of the book – how around a manuscript, a biography, hidden first in a clock, then in a wild dog's kennel. The clock is stopped because Time itself has to stop. Time and occasionally slightly confused (the confusing) episodes follow in great succession. Jozek, quite unexpectedly, becomes Secretary of the Workers Union. The formerly despised child suddenly becomes a man of consequence and power. The Child, who hoped to destroy him before the election, becomes his seemingly loyal deputy.

Zionism and the Jewish question figure in the story a great deal. Little Jozek is amazed "Every Jew I found out that I am a Jew. Slowly but he has approached me for a slowly but he has driven to the conclusion that I am a Jew. He has remained as antisemitic as the Nazis used to be, minus the extermination camps. Now, however, instead of saying 'Jew' he must use the word 'Zionist'. A Jew has even to apologize for having been arrested as a Ukrainian nationalist and not a Zionist. He had no right to be a true patriot."

In the end the hidden manuscript is discovered and Jozek has to face a disciplinary Party Committee. The Child apologizes for being about to betray him but finds that he has no chance of doing so: he too is expelled from the Party with Potoczek.

The two succeed in reaching home (where some old acquaintances are waiting for them). There they find the Israeli press is almost as biased self-centred and bigoted as the Polish one. But Jozek comes to a conclusion: "No passport can make you free. Freedom must be achieved after a struggle."

Reading Szechester's book is a little like a struggle here and there, but it is worthwhile. His is an original and unusual novel, the work of a writer and a gentle man.

Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto*, which was the original for the book, was published by Penguin in 1963. The translation by Robin Symcox was published in 1972, marked the book's appearance in English of the novel, which was written by Thomas Mann in 1936 and gives a "thinly veiled" portrait of the actor Gustav Fröhlich, who was a member of the German Nazi Party. *Mephisto* was originally published in Amsterdam, and evoked the longest (lawless) history of German publishing, which was banned for many years.

Orderers of our environment

Roger Scruton

ANDREW SAINT

The Image of the Architect
180pp, Yale University Press, £9.95,
0 300 03013 4

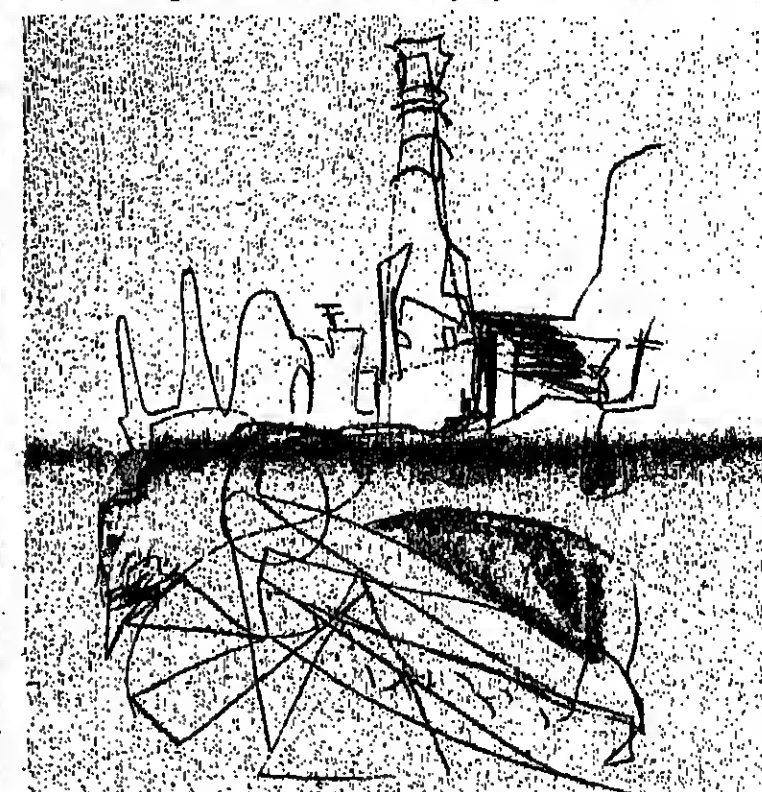
Andrew Saint is surely right to think that there is an important study to be made of the public and private image of the architect in our own and previous ages. I do not believe, however, that he has quite succeeded in writing it. His book consists of anecdotal glimpses of architects and movements, supported by documents and photographs, with little connecting thread, so far as I could see, and with no major historical or critical thesis. The introduction fleetingly represents the work as an exercise in the Marxian theory of history – with the well-worn quotation from the *Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* – but in the event this turns out to be no more than a posture, which causes Mr Saint, that is just as well, since there is no better refutation of the Marxian theory of history than architecture, which, from the Greeks to the Modern Movement, has shown consciousness determining life with a vengeance. Architecture orders the environment in which life's possibilities grow, and books little opposition from the well-springs of "social being".

Saint's underlying assumption is also right, that the image of the architect has changed during the last century. He criticizes Pugin, Ruskin and Morris for their view that the anonymity of the medieval architect is the sign of an architecture conceived entirely in collective terms. The criticism is familiar, and correct, so far as it goes. However, I do not think that Saint should go on to suggest the opposite view, that "down the centuries one strain of architectural ideology has been heard much louder than others": the strain of architectural individualism, which ascribes both merit in particular buildings and general progress in architecture to a personal conception, usually of style. Saint attributes such a view (on no evidence) to Plato, and to the ancients generally. I doubt that the attribution is correct; but in any case the view is surely indefensible.

Of course we do occasionally discover the names of architects in classical literature; but the examples concern famous monuments and temples, and therefore only the smallest proportion of architectural practice. It is significant that in the major surviving textbook of classical architecture – that of Vitruvius – building is written about as though a "personal conception" were the least significant part of it, and common discipline of far greater and more

lasting worth. Vitruvius' own architecture has disappeared, and his name would certainly not have survived had it not been for his writing. Saint knows very well that most architecture is far less the record of an artistic idea than of ordinary practical understanding (or misunderstanding). Thus when he turns his attention to the twentieth-century architect his gaze must perforce sink well below the level of artistic ideas, so low indeed as to light on such vandals as Poulson ("architect" of Newcastle's destruction) and Lewis Womersley, city architect of Sheffield. It could be said, however, that Womersley's photograph, in front of the appalling New York, whose destruction in 1962 was a crime comparable to the destruction of Newcastle, or the building of the Barbican.

Of course architects are individuals: only an individual could have organized the Angel Choir of Lincoln Cathedral, just as it required an individual to design my bathroom. But an individual is not necessarily an individualist. The largely faultless domestic architecture of eighteenth-century England shows that, so long as architects are treated as tradesmen and servants, whose main duty is to please their betters, they can act in a fundamentally decent manner, and so achieve their highest goal, which is anonymity. In that, at least, Ruskin



"Levant Mine ruins", 1963, by Peter Lanyon, reproduced from Cornwall, which contains thirty-three drawings by Lanyon and thirty-five photographs by his son, Andrew (80pp, Alison Hodge, Bosival Farmhouse, Newmill, Penzance, Cornwall, £8.75, 0 906720 06 0).

First among Finns

J. M. Richards

MALCOLM QUANTRILL

Alvar Aalto: A critical study
307pp, Secker and Warburg, £23,
0 436 39400 6

The Finnish master Alvar Aalto has altogether escaped the opprobrium recently heaped on the Modern Movement in architecture in spite of being one of its outstanding figures and a founding member of the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*. The reasons are evident: Aalto was essentially a humanist, he was never doctrinaire, he used his intellect with an understanding of their inherent nature; and he always sought a sympathetic relationship between a building and its setting.

Between a building and its setting, Frank Lloyd Wright, with whose work Aalto has something in common, was damned – and claimed to practise "organic" architecture. If anyone of the generation after Wright can be said to have practised it also, it was Alvar Aalto.

For all these reasons much has been published about him since his death in

1976, notably by his life-long friend and biographer Göran Schildt, many of whose writings have been translated into English, and by the American professor and critic Paul David Pearson whose *Alvar Aalto and the Prolonged Search for a Style* (1972) is a particularly acute and well-balanced account of Aalto's architecture, especially during his formative years. Yet another study of Aalto's work ought therefore to justify itself by furnishing new material or new insights. It cannot be said that Malcolm Quantrill's book does either, but it will nevertheless be useful in providing a chronological description of Aalto's buildings and projects in which the influences, internal and external, to which they were subject are informatively analysed.

Quantrill is concerned with the work rather than with the man, except in one rather unnecessary passage in which for no apparent reason he introduces the topic of what he calls Aalto's "drinking habits". Most Finns drink, and Aalto did not allow his food and drink – or any other personal idiosyncrasies – to diminish his dedication to architecture. Only once, to the concern of his friends, did he

show any irresolution of this kind; that was during the months following his first wife Aino's early death from cancer in 1949, for she was not only his devoted companion but also his professional partner. Quantrill cannot not always be relied on, for example that he did not visit Finland – let alone meet Aalto – until 1953, which perhaps explains why in this book he does not sufficiently emphasize Aino Aalto's share in nearly all Alvar Aalto's designs up to the time of her death.

A more significant weakness emerges when he writes about the historical background to Aalto's work, which, as he rightly stresses, is essential to an understanding of it. Quantrill's history is shaky in several places. He states that the neo-classical tradition which dominated Finnish architecture throughout the nineteenth century was "imposed by the Russians". This is not so. There were Swedish-trained architects, notably the Italian-born Carlo Bassi, putting up neo-classical buildings in Åbo, then the capital, long before Engel started work in the Russian new capital Helsinki, begun after the Russian annexation of Finland in 1809. Nor was neo-classicism confined to the Swedish-dominated Åbo (Turku in Finnish).

The purest of all Finland's neo-classical churches, that at Hämeenlinna, by Louis Desprez, was built earlier still, in 1798.

Quantrill's architectural judgement, also, is not always to be relied on, for example his extraordinary pronouncement that Aalto's "successor as the leading figure in Finnish architecture since the mid-60s" is Reima Pietilä. Pietilä is an architect of undeniable earnestness but variable talent with echoes of Aalto discernible in some of the buildings, but Finnish architects would certainly not place him on the level Quantrill appears to do – it would be rather like conferring the mantle of Sir Edwin Lutyens on the late Sir Basil Spence.

In spite of these and some other shortcomings, and in spite of its high price, Quantrill's book will be useful to anyone who wishes to refer to the sequence of buildings, and especially the successive changes of direction, that marked Aalto's long career. It includes a comprehensive bibliography embracing magazine articles, and exhibition catalogues as well as books; and an adequate index, which, however, is made treacherous to use by so many of the pages being unnumbered.

Jacques Lacan

The Death of an Intellectual Hero

STUART SCHNEIDERMAN
As a cult hero, the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan provoked controversy and passion in his followers and detractors. Schneiderman, the only American to have undergone analysis with Lacan, takes us into the Doctor's office, where we see the workings of the infamous "short session", and paints an intimate and engrossing portrait of one of the psychoanalytic world's most vivid figures. May 1983, £11.95



Promethean Fire

Reflections on the Origin of the Mind

CHARLES J. LUMSDEN & EDWARD O. WILSON

In this highly readable book Lumsden and Wilson explore the origins of the early human mind, and attribute its sudden emergence to gene-culture coevolution, a change which allowed man to pass beyond the previous limits of biology. *Promethean Fire* offers a succinct review of general sociobiological theory, as well as a history of the dispute that marked the beginnings of the new discipline in the 1970s. 26 line drawings by Whitney Powell. May 1983, £14.00

The Witness of Poetry

Czesław Miłosz

Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature, reflects upon poetry's testimony to the events of our tumultuous times. He addresses many of the major problems and conflicts of contemporary poets and poetry – isolation from society, pessimism and negativism – from a unique perspective of sensibility and optimism. The *Charles Eliot Norton Lectures*. May 1983, £7.15

HARVARD University Press

126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1

Schooled in disputation

Robert Skidelsky

A. J. P. TAYLOR
A Personal History
278pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 10972 8

A. J. P. Taylor's present wife, Eve, once said to me, "The thing you must remember about Alan is that he is a very evasive person". His autobiography bears this out, though not in an obvious way. Apparently many passages had to be omitted because they were deemed libellous. His second wife, Tony Crosland's sister, is not mentioned at all, at her request. Some of what remains is embarrassingly frank. Do we need to know that his father scraped worms out of young Alan's anus? He reveals that he never shared a double bed till he was seventy; that when he first slept with his first wife "nothing was achieved as often happened with me". Frankness of this kind is deceptive: Taylor remains as intellectually elusive as ever, impossible to pin down, full of decoys and red herrings. Perhaps it was a technique he picked up at his Quaker disputations at Bootham School, to draw attention away from painful areas.

This is not to say that the result is dull. Taylor cannot write a dull sentence. The narrative moves with his accustomed pace; there are many funny stories; there are affectionate portraits, mainly from his early life. But I doubt if the book will make him many new admirers, and it will disturb and sadden existing ones. He emerges as a lonely, somewhat bitter man, vain, perverse and paradoxical, unable, as time went on, to make or keep friends. In most of his professional relations, what kept him going was his work, his children - whom he adores and writes about with a love and loyalty of a native architect and musician. At the age of seventy he found an "almost perfect" third wife, who one hopes has brought him the happiness which eluded him earlier.

Much of the ground is already familiar, but there are some new facts. One had not realized how rich the Taylor family was. His grandfather,

James Taylor, a Lancashire cotton merchant, left £250,000. His father never made less than £5,000 a year in the family firm - well over £50,000 in today's values. (At that time workers were getting £100 a year.) Taylor was educated at good private schools. Cynics will say: how can a man born with such a big silver spoon in his mouth go on talking about being "sprung from the working class and being a 'man of the people'"? Yet the feeling seems to have been perfectly genuine. No doubt it has something to do with the more egalitarian, democratic spirit of the North of England. Both in his *English History 1914-1945* and in his popular journalism Taylor expressed and celebrated the values of the common man. Somewhere in this book he says he never bothered to republish his articles written for the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Pictorial* and such-like because they were too ephemeral. I suspect they came more from the heart than anything else he has written.

What emerges from his autobiography is how much an outsider Taylor was in the society of the southern, academic, middle class. In thirty-eight years at Oxford, he says, he never made a single close friend. (Such friends as he did make in later life, for example Lord Beaverbrook, were outsiders like himself.) In fact, the sections dealing with Oxford are disturbing and depressing. Oxford certainly does not emerge with credit, but neither does Taylor. He feels he was treated shabbily, and so he was. He was far and away the best modern historian there. He should have been offered the Regius Professorship (he says he would have turned it down); it was mean of the History Faculty to terminate his special lectureship in international history. Academics are a "craven lot", as he says. The trouble is, there is too much vanity in his róstroses. "I am the most distinguished and by far the best known of the lot", he says of the eleven people who got first in history at Oxford in 1927. It is perfectly true; it would still have been better left to others to say it. He was never a professor "except by popular acclaim". He talks of the flattering academic offers he did receive and turned down. We hear a great deal about his spellbinding performances as lecturer and CND orator. It is always that way. When people are cheated of their

dearest ambition, no amount of success in other areas takes away the bitterness.

By contrast, Taylor talks about his historical work with insight and detachment. "All my books are old-fashioned textbooks of political history, enlivened by bright remarks." This is true; but it should be added that the bright remarks really are bright. He has an intuitive feel for what is important. Time and again, in some aside, he twists round one's whole way of seeing something. I can't think of any historian who has been able to do this so elegantly and economically. Yet even about history Taylor says something silly. The historian, he writes, should aim to be as popular as the novelist. I doubt if *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe* has displaced *The Camelot* from the suburban housewife's bookshelf. The reason is that Taylor is too clever; and it is perverse to imagine that cleverness can be other than a strenuous pleasure. This is not to deny that he has made history fun for a lot of people who would otherwise have been turned off it completely - not least by his lectures on television. But he would be as

incapable of writing the equivalent of Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, which is pure soap-opera, as he would of displaying the credulity of Lord Dacre. He knows what history is about.

Taylor's judgments are never less than forthright; they are also very much hit and miss. The Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, even the use of Soviet tanks to put down uprisings in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, never gave him any qualms, he says, because Soviet rule was preferable to what these countries had had between the wars. Even if this is true - and it is not true of the Czechs - it is beside the point. The Austrians had a foul régime in the 1930s, too; but without the Soviet presence they have developed a robust form of social democracy. The choice, as Taylor must know, is not between a Horthy and a Kadar, but between Kadar and what would have come about under free conditions in the post-war world, when Fascism was completely discredited.

Taylor's softness towards Communism (as long as it is kept well away from England) is worrying, since he claims never to have had any

illusions about it. Yet justification of Stalinism without illusions is more repellent than justification of it with illusions. Taylor seems to believe that murderous dictatorship and the Red Army were necessary to get rid of landlords and capitalists in Russia and Eastern Europe. Perhaps they were. Most people would say the price was not worth paying. There is a set of attitudes here I do not claim to understand. Perhaps one would have had to live through the inter-war years to make sense of them. There also seem to be certain kinds of Nonconformist (one thinks of E. H. Carr as well) for whom power and success come to be substitutes for God and morals.

In his introduction, Taylor praises his publishers of forty years, Hamish Hamilton. It is a shame they could not have done a better job on his autobiography. The paper is terrible, there are too many lines to a page, there are dozens of misprints, one of them even being a chapter heading, and the print of the index is microscopic. Such a dazzling career in history and letters should not have been allowed to end on this note.

Working methods

Phyllis Willmott

JOHN BIRCH THOMAS
Shop Boy: An Autobiography
181pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£6.95.
0 7100 9347 0

DAVID DOUGLASS and JOEL KRIEGER
A Miner's Life
118pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£4.50.
0 7100 9473 6

A hundred years and strikingly different values and attitudes separate these two accounts of working lives. One is the story, recollected in the tranquillity of retirement, of the life of a shop-boy in Victorian times; the other a semi-biographical and angry account of coalmining today.

Born in Peckham in 1860, John Birch Thomas had to wait until his seventeenth before writing down his memories of childhood and youth. He lived on into his nineties so that he must have completed and set aside this record of his first twenty-five years long before his death in 1952. The handwritten and laboriously worked-out account that he left behind was, fortunately, preserved. His grandchildren eventually and rightly concluded that it was worth publishing. One of them, a granddaughter whose academic life is that of nineteenth-century studies, prepared the manuscript for publication. In a brief preface she makes clear that she has done little editing; the style that marks the book and the voice that so distinctively comes from it - that of John Birch Thomas alone.

As his granddaughter recalls, it is a voice bold and her family knew well. On their visits to him in the 1930s Thomas regularly entertained his grandchildren and other members of the family by those anecdotes of his early life that he was then in the process of writing down. He comes over in the book, as he must have done in life, as a resilient and somewhat self-satisfied character who achieved his ambitions by a combination of hard work, shrewd common sense and a will to learn by experience. These qualities were applied with the same determination when he turned his hand in old age to writing what he describes as "a true account of actual happenings - a tale of memories crudely told".

The style of the book is, in fact, contrived and amateurish rather than crude. The tone is sometimes heavily humorous as if, indeed, he wrote with children or at most very unsophisticated adults in mind as his readers. At times, however, he does try to introduce a literary trick or two, influenced one suspects by his reading of Dickens. It is an "adventure story", all sparks and crackles, and easy - if sometimes a little irritating - to read. But it has real value as a social history. It is not only a record of the working conditions in shops in Victorian times - an area not much covered by social historians - but also the minute details of ordinary daily life of the period.

Through Thomas's "tale of memories" we meet a world in which a bed-time cup of cocoa offered by an amiable young landlady to her boy lodger was seen as the greatest of treats. We are taken back to a time when high-buttoned boots were in fashion, shop-boys delivered goods by handcart, and trams from central London to Peckham were drawn by mules. In the 1870s, by the author's account, Peckham was a most respectable and desirable suburb within which Peckham Rye was a centre of "select" shops and high-class merchandise.

The only child of failed shopowners who were also singularly half-hearted parents, Thomas seems to have left

them for good, and with no regrets on either side, when he came back to London from Swansea. (His parents had moved there after their business collapsed.) He had started work at the age of eleven so that by the time he returned to London alone, at fourteen, he already had varied experience of shop work in Swansea. By the age of twenty-five, when the book ends, he had worked in many different types of shop. He describes working conditions, employers and customers, and the kinds of shops he worked in - a china shop in Swansea, a toy shop in Peckham, Rye, a grocery store in Bethnal Green, among others. His working days were long (in Bethnal Green he had to work until midnight on Saturdays, before going up to his in the bedroom he shared with seven other assistants). His wages at first were barely sufficient to provide him with food and clothing. On Sunday, the only day off, he wandered about London, on his own but not unhappy. He had learnt early that self-reliance and calculated self-interest were his best hope of "getting on": every one he made from one shop to another was with the conscious intent to better himself in terms of experience or wages. At the same time, he was by no means a tough or unfeeling lad and, considering his afflictions (childhood rheumatism, which he carried with him for the rest of his life, and a severe case of asthma), he was a success in business and marriage as much to an innate good nature and decency as to other qualities.

It is certain that conditions of work for the majority of "shop boys" have changed a great deal since John Birch Thomas's time. This must also be true in some ways for the majority of miners. But it remains a hazardous and unhealthy occupation in which for many, according to the authors of *A Miner's Life*, conditions remain "different from the nineteenth century". Even improvements, such as modern machinery, is supposed to have made, have brought with them new hazards.

There is no single, unmistakable voice speaking in *A Miner's Life*, an amalgam of several. Paradoxically, an "underground" voice is that of an American academic, Joel Krieger, whose research interest is the private coal industry. The "surface" - or more obviously identifiable - voice belongs to David Douglass, who sometimes speaks as "coalface writer", which was for some fifteen years, and sometimes as "millant union official", which he has now become.

It is the "millant union official" who, one might conclude after reading this book, makes the most sensible comment (although not the most vivid) about the "coalface" (the "surface" voice from the "coalface" worker): that "we should struggle to isolate the numbers of people below ground to fewer and fewer, by lowering the age of retirement and raising the age of entry". Unfortunately, at the same time adds later, when in such a desperate for work, this is an aim which means universally desired.

Viewpoint: analysis and the autobiographer

Charles Rycroft

In the early, heroic days of psychoanalysis, it would not, I imagine, have been difficult to find an analyst prepared to propound with confidence the psychoanalytical theory of autobiography. In a paper entitled, perhaps, "The Psychopathology of Autobiography" or "The Autobiographer as Narcissist and Exhibitionist", the infantile fixation points and the unconscious perverse fantasies of the autobiographer would have been located and defined, and autobiographers added to the list of those who, like children, savages, neurotics, lunatics and artists were impelled by the primitive, primary processes of their Id.

But such a reductionist approach would be inconceivable today, and modern analysts are, I think, more likely to be impressed by the number of daunting problems about consciousness, self-consciousness, identity and memory that are raised by autobiographies, than by the fact that particular autobiographies may provide evidence confirming, or perhaps even disconfirming, particular psychoanalytical theories about human development.

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines autobiography as "The writing of one's own history; the story of one's life written by himself", thereby drawing attention to the self and perhaps the only certain fact about autobiography: the fact that the autobiographer is a reflective writer, since the author and his subject are by definition the same person. Or so the ordinary conventions of thought and language and everyday life compel one to assume. But if one allows oneself to question the unity and identity of the person who writes the autobiography and the subject who is written about, and considers the possibility that neither the autobiographer nor the autobiographer are single selves but

rather multiple sets of selves, it becomes apparent that the writer of an autobiography is engaged in an activity far more complex than the word "reflective" can anywhere near to suggesting. The appropriate analogy ceases to be that of a painter painting a self-portrait and becomes that of someone occupying a temporal corridor of mirrors and communing in turn with images of past and present selves.

The previous paragraph is too abstract and obscure and I must try again. It is, I am suggesting, misleadingly naive to suppose that writing an autobiography is simply a process during which a person writes down his memories of his past life. Since neither the person writing the autobiography nor the person being written about is really such a simple entity as such a description would seem to imply, the autobiographer cannot be just a camera to his own past, but must (cannot but) select his memories in the light of his present conception of himself; and his memories are not just audio-visual tape recordings of the events in his past but are experiences being re-lived, or sometimes re-living, including imaginative recollection and carrying with them revivable past conceptions of both the author and his subject. The process of writing an autobiography is, I am suggesting, not one in which the present "I" records events in the life of the past "me", but one in which a dialectic takes place between present "I" and past "me", at the end of which both have changed. The author-subject could say "I really truthfully 'I wrote it' and 'It was me'".

I am, of course, well aware that the books that purport to be autobiographies can fairly accurately be described as "present 'I'" recalling and describing the activities of a past "me", but such "books", which are usually written by politicians, public actors, or really, better, called memoirs or Retrospectives. Their aim is self-discovery or self-revelation but not self-assertion, the making of a case for oneself to be remembered, or, say more about such books later.

First I must explain why as a writer of memoirs I should choose to write an autobiography in a way that has been immediately into such

obscurities as multiple selves and dialectics between past and present.

The reason is, of course, that as a psychotherapist I am compelled to question both the conception of himself and the history of his life that each patient brings to me initially. If he knew himself truly and his implicit, unwritten autobiography was accurate, assistance would surely not seek or need my natural for me to conceive of myself as an assistant autobiographer, concerned to notice and point out consistencies and recurrences that have not occurred to the patient himself, to point out biases in the direction of, typically, self-denigration or self-justification, and to discriminate between his own true voice and his learned imitations of other, typically, ancestral voices. It is striking that all the various schools of psychotherapy have developed terminologies for distinguishing between true and false self, between persona (mask) and self, between assertive ego and creative unconscious, between authentic and inauthentic, expressive and defensive, spontaneous and rigid. Given my immersion in patients and the learned literature, it is, I think, hardly surprising that my own ideal conception of an autobiography should be one in which the autobiographer remains in pursuit of himself while recounting himself, or that I should betray impatience with autobiographers who are merely advertising the continued existence of a long-standing ego.

It is, however, far from certain that such an ideal autobiography has or ever could be realized. Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu* come to my mind as works in which the art is generated by the continued dialectic between the author's past and present, but although autobiographical, neither is strictly speaking an autobiography.

Then, immediately, the permanent essence of things which is usually hidden, is set free, and our real self, which often had seemed dead for a long time yet was not dead altogether, awakes and comes to life as it receives the heavenly feed now proffered to it. One minute delivered from the order of time creates in us, that we may enjoy it, the man delivered from the order of time.

Few autobiographers, however, aim as high as Wordsworth and Proust, and something must be said about those who aim to do no more than tell the story of their own life. First, it has to be said that all autobiographies are of necessity incomplete accounts of their subject's life, since the beginning, birth and infancy, is beyond recall and can only be known about by hearsay, and the end, death, can only take place after the autobiographer has stopped

The intention of both is something other and more than the "writing of one's own history". Wordsworth described *The Prelude* as "the poem on the growth of my own mind" and, as his own mind in his own view was essentially a poet's mind, he was concerned with the growth of his poetic capacity and imagination and not with the story of all his other selves, and how they interwove and interacted to create the life of William Wordsworth Esq., distributor of stamps for the county of Westmorland and Poet Laureate. And Proust, if Roger Shattuck's and R. C. Zaehner's interpretation of *A la Recherche* is correct, was concerned to contrast the ephemerality, the intermittence, the pointlessness of life as lived by one's (his) everyday ego with the sense of permanence and timelessness revealed by those moments in which one is (he was) touched and surprised by live memory.

Then, immediately, the permanent essence of things which is usually hidden, is set free, and our real self, which often had seemed dead for a long time yet was not dead altogether, awakes and comes to life as it receives the heavenly feed now proffered to it. One minute delivered from the order of time creates in us, that we may enjoy it, the man delivered from the order of time.

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Generations

In its curious bottle the glistening dancings, a fossil tree, and my finger-print below its self-taped label shows where I cut myself as a child. Under glass the Légar lithograph, pierced by a laser of wintry sun, travels back a quarter century before its time: the bullseye breast, the forliddog traffic-light colours dispersed to the water gardens at Giveroy.

Sixteen to the Jau de Paume, to me the curling leaves of the waterlilies were discarded letters refusing to drown. Perhaps that is why I cage yours in this wire tray, trapping its amotion. Mother, you writs of sadness at death, your fear of being left the last and I try to pierce the mist rising from your Yorkshire hills that fogs my paper-weight's crystal ball.

Five, I clutch at your coat, my hand wily rubbing against the astrakhan's convoluted hairs. Brilliantly, you bow your head to Egyptian pillows and on the bus we suck them, two sunken-cheeked old crones. It seemed then that we could ride home forever through the unending afternoon, but light changes, we see what we feel

and can see as the pines darken, as this bottle dims, as the glass becomes an ancient hand wily becoming my Légar back, finally hermetic, sharp and primary. I cannot help you though I remember when I cut my finger on your brooch how you put the slit to your lips and drew me into you, tasting me as if I were the sweetest candy.

David Sweetman

patterns and connections would emerge.

Thirdly, autobiography has an inbuilt tendency towards something that has, I think, to be called falsification. The process of detaching that thread which is one's own life from the fabric which has been simultaneously woven by those around one, introduces an inherent bias towards egocentricity, at the expense of objectivity, and towards exaggeration of one's difference and alienation from others. There are, to be sure, ways in which an autobiographer may seek more or less successfully to correct this bias, notably by sharing the stage with someone else or something else, eg, his art or his profession, that he values as much as himself, but paradoxically this purchases truth (and often readability) at the cost of deviating from pure autobiography. The classic examples of the genre, eg, Cellini's and Rousseau's, were after all written by monumental egotists.

Social historians and literary critics, such as Lionel Trilling, tell us that autobiography is a comparatively recent literary genre and that its rise is a consequence and manifestation of "something like a mutation in human nature" - the phrase is Trilling's - that occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As a result of this mutation, that abstraction Modern Man came to conceive of himself as having a self, an identity, which was defined in terms of itself - and not, as previous men had defined themselves, in terms of their social role or achievements - and in terms of its opposition to, not membership of, society. As Trilling says: "The subject of an autobiography is just such a self, hunched on revealing himself in all his truth, bent that is to say, on demonstrating his sincerity." In other words, people became individuals and ceased to be mere limbs of the body politic, and their inner experiences, their private inner selves, became of paramount interest to themselves, and, if written down, of potential interest to others. On this view the writing of autobiographies, individualism and alienation are facets of a social, historical process that legitimizes egocentricity and makes one's own self-awareness an, perhaps even the, appropriate object of one's attention.

According to Lacan, the development of the modern "Je" was encouraged by the manufacture of mirrors. Blown glass mirrors were first manufactured on a commercial scale in Venice in the early sixteenth century and plate-glass mirrors became available and cheap early in the eighteenth. So, whereas Medieval Man can only have had fleeting and blurred impressions of his own body, Modern Man can see himself clearly in mirrors and has frequent opportunities for entrancing encounters with his own image. It is, therefore, tempting to correlate the enormous increase in the production of autobiographies in this century with the technological changes that have enabled people to make physical self-scrutiny a daily bathroom event and to see - and hear - themselves as others see them.

But maybe, as Trilling has pointed out, it was really all the other way round and it was the "something like a mutation in human nature" leading to greater self-awareness, that created the demand for mirrors and the impetus to invent cameras, films, and tape-recorders. In either case autobiographers are liable to become ensnared by one of the moral contradictions of our individualistic society. The pursuit of fame, cultivation of one's gifts in pursuit of self-fulfilment, searching for one's identity, writing the story of one's life, are all meritorious activities, yet none the less expose one to charges of egotism and vanity. Renan, who in late middle-age published his *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*, none the less wrote: "To suppose that the trivial details of one's own life are worth recording is to give proof of the pettiness of one's vanity." One writes such things in order to communicate to others the theory of the universe one bears within oneself. And also "The man who has time to keep a private diary has never understood the immensity of the universe".

WILLIAM TREVOR

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Fools of Fortune

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commentary

Egg and ego

Peter Kemp

Jack London's *Tales of the Klondike*: The One Thousand Dozen Channel 4

Bleakness - physical and psychological - is the prevailing atmosphere of Jack London's Klondike stories. Set against a background of icy immensities - "thousands of miles of silent white" - they chronicle chillingly extreme behaviour. Sub-human responses, it appears, are generated by sub-zero temperatures. "The Northerner is ungenerative because it is so cold there," thinks one of London's characters. "Fear of hell-fire cannot be bred in an ice-box."

Bucking this up are numerous instances of reversion to savagery. Transfer to Alaska transforms Buck, the canine hero of *The Call of the Wild*, from a civilized domestic pet to a proudly primitive creature in whom "the dominant primordial beast" has been unleashed. Likewise, in the Klondike short stories, human beings who have journeyed north regularly regress to the animal: a woman makes "a cat-like leap" at an attacker; a man resembling "a ferocious ... dog" lets his anger rumble in his throat "in an animal-like way". Repeatedly, London goes into view what he calls "certain primal and analogous characteristics in a hungry wolf-dog or a starving man".

It was to be expected, then, that the television series, Jack London's *Tales of the Klondike*, would be strong on harsh environments and fierce activity. In the event, what the opening adaptation trotted out was comically tame. Yet this first story to be dramatized, "The One Thousand Dozen", should have been something of a shock. Like a number of the Klondike pieces, it tracks the behaviour of an individual driven by monomania. As if in a parody of the usual rush for gold, David Rasmussen toils along the Yukon trail aiming to strike it rich, not by prospecting but by profiting from trade. Aware that famine in the Klondike has made food worth more than its weight in gold-dust, he heads for Dawson, the capital, with a cargo of eggs.

The story that charts his progress is both rough and elegant. Fragile but potentially worth a fortune, the eggs are neatly symbolic of the prospectors' ambitions; found, on arrival, to be

totten, they supply a pungent analogy with the corruption London noted elsewhere in the Klondike. They also match the increasingly racist state of Rasmussen himself. Struggling over obstacles with courageous avidity, he becomes emotionally and physically calloused, inflicting appalling injury on himself and other people.

For just a few moments, the television version looked likely to do justice to the story's figures. Old photographs of the Klondike, with the trekking miners no more than a tiny trickle of black across vast slopes of snow - offered harrowingly frozen images of Arctic arduousness. Then the screen glowed into colour and the snow melted away - never to return: this rendered much of the story meaningless. Describing the feverish activity with which, as winter nears, boats are flung together for the journey up the not-yet-frozen river, London refers to "caulking, nailing and pitching in a frenzy of haste for which adequate explanation was not far to seek. Each day the snow-line crept farther down." Here, adequate explanation was extremely remote. Though Orson Welles, on the soundtrack, rumbled balefully about "the rapidly approaching winter", its advent was never signalled by so much as a snow-flake.

Accordingly, Rasmussen's searing odyssey appeared to demand nothing more strenuous than a spot of outward-bound boating. Agonizingly protracted in the story, full of thwarted doublings-back, risky teenenings over ice-bridges, exhausted hackings along snow-clogged trails - his journey was straightened out and speeded up. The toll it took was ludicrously light. London's Rasmussen - his mouth a mess of "bean-soups" from his dismal diet - limps into Dawson ravaged by frost-bite, which has turned his nose and cheek-bones "bloody-black", cost him some toes, and gnawed hideously into his foot.

The television Rasmussen neared the Midnight Sun with nothing more disfiguring than a five o'clock shadow. Remorselessly something milder for the story's bitter ending - instead of hanging himself, Rasmussen saved his skin by scampering away from the enraged miners who had bought his eggs. In staking a claim to these Jack London pieces Channel 4 must have hoped they had struck lucky; but, to judge from this first specimen, what they have on their hands is a fool's gold, a virtually worthless travesty of the genuine thing.

Wars of words

Richard Calvocoressi

German Writers and Artists in Exile Goethe Institute

Some 70,000 German-speaking refugees from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany were accepted by Britain during the 1930s, among them several distinguished writers, scientists, artists and academics. Many of those who were interned on the Isle of Man in 1940 were later to work for the Intelligence Corps or, if they were lucky, the German Service of the BBC, where they made a valuable contribution to the war of words against the Third Reich. To celebrate fifty years of "German Writers in Exile", the Goethe Institute recently held a symposium in its elegant premises in Princess Gate, in collaboration with the London-based PEN Centre of German-speaking Authors (Abtad).

PEN had been established in Germany as early as 1925; its first secretary was Herwarth Walden, whose expressionist periodical *Der Sturm* before the First World War carried a series of sharp, intense drawings by Kokoschka (who also worked for a time as Walden's assistant). When Hitler came to power, German PEN was taken over by Nazi sympathizers and Walden was forced to flee. On the initiative of Ernst Toller, Max Hermann Neisser and others,

German PEN in exile "representing free German literature" was founded in 1934, with Heinrich Mann as its first president. During 1938-39 this group, PEN, merged with the English branch of threatened writers from Austria and Czechoslovakia and arranged for their emigration to England. The secretary of German PEN in exile from 1941 until 1950 was Richard Friedenthal, novelist and biographer of Goethe, who then became its president for two years. As editor of a popular German literary journal, *Die Welt*, he was for twelve years a marked man.

The Goethe Institute audience heard lectures by Will Schaber, a former president, and H.G. Adler, the current holder of the post, on the history of PEN and on England as a traditional haven for exiled German writers and thinkers. Eggon Larsen's *Die Jahre nach London*, made for television in 1964, was a work of various PEN members past and present, and Robert Lucas gave a talk on satire as a weapon against Nazi propaganda. Illustrated with recordings from BBC wartime broadcasts, Larsen's film, clearly a piece of re-educational propaganda aimed at the Germans, was somewhat glowing in its depiction of an England glowing with racial harmony. But it included a number of poignant interviews with ordinary people - a decorator, a textile manager, turned

dallacassen-owner, a trades unionist, a wine-merchant, an old age pensioner - explaining why they would never return to Germany.

One of the more interesting addresses, by Alfred Unger, was concerned with the "politicization" of the Free German League of Culture. This organization was founded in London in 1938 by Fred Uhlmann, Oskar Kokoschka and others who felt the lack of a forum where refugee artists could hold discussions, put on plays, and exhibitions, and work effectively in the anti-Nazi cause. The League contained several Communists who remained relatively quiet until after the breakdown of the Nazi-Soviet pact and Hitler's invasion of Russia, when they came increasingly to dominate its activities. As a result, the non-Communist members, tired of infighting, formed a splinter movement, Club 1943, which still meets in London today; while after the war many of those who adhered to the Free German League went to live in East Germany. Some of the League's publications (in which Kokoschka "tried to lay a few humanistic cuckoo-eggs", as he later wrote) were on show at the Goethe Institute, together with portrait sketches of prominent figures from the arts, such as Brecht, Piscator, Max Reinhardt, Maria Theresia, Heinrich Heine and Stefan Zweig, the Viennese caricaturist Benedikt Fred Dobner, who worked in Berlin from 1926 until 1933.

Private reasons

Patricia Craig

P. D. JAMES

Death of an Expert Witness Anglia TV

There are two kinds of satisfactory detective fiction. One goes in for trickery and intricacy, is blatantly artificial in design and often witty in style, or at least comic. The other creates an effect of realism, in tellence of the pattern required by the genre, by concentrating on the characters it deals with rather than on the exercise of ingenuity involved in its construction. P. D. James, who writes the second kind, has pointed out that the professional policeman, like her hero Dalgleish, is rather more of an administrator than the first kind allows - there, for the sake of dramatic effect, and also to promote brand loyalty in the reader, it's necessary to have the hero actually on the scene of each crime, interrogating suspects, and conducting the investigation himself.

This is a fairly slight departure from reality, and so is the convention that makes the detective enigmatic as well as proficient; the latter is necessary, of course, to ensure that the final surprise will be fully effective. The most obvious use of artifice occurs in the arrangement of suspects around a victim, all of them furnished with a plausible motive for the murder and each being subjected, in turn, to unerring scrutiny. The serious writer of detective fiction, who chooses to stress the naturalistic aspects of the plot, rather than the unnatural framework imposed upon it, must be an acute observer of people's psychological peculiarities as well as an ardent technician.

P. D. James exactly fits the bill, which is why her novels so quickly acquired an enthusiastic readership, and why, as the current Anglia adaptation by Robin Chapman, directed by Herbert Wise, shows, they turn so readily into agreeable television serials, with every attribute necessary to engross an audience: mystery, tension, intriguing behaviour convincingly embodied, and so forth. The film's verisimilitude endorses the author's insistence of drawing attention to the absence of this quality in the original work (which tends to happen with the novels of an author like Agatha Christie, whose feats of

prestirgitation impress while her characterization appals).

It is playful of P. D. James to let *Death of an Expert Witness* be a forensic science laboratory, with clues and murder dispersed among people whose business is the scientific evaluation of clues. Here, in the opening chapter, you find Dr Lorrimer (Graham Palmer in the television dramatization) belching in the foorthday manner of the archetypal victim, at long last, with everyone around him positively going out of his way to laugh at him. Only Brenda Primrose (Chloe Franks), the young forensic biologist who takes a kind of interest in her scientific ambulance work, it is who comes on the body of Dr Lorrimer, on the floor of the police Lab, after some hard-pressed work has been to work with a mallet.

A blood-stained overall, one particle of vomit and three dark hair from two separate heads are among the clues which go out from Forensic Science Laboratory to return to it for analysis in the course of a lively investigation. P. D. James, policeman and poet (Ray Marston quickly on the spot (by helicopter) listening and assessing, speaking out to the delinquent and withholding facile consolation from the distressed no high spirits - turning an enquiry into a romp - or idiosyncrasy here is plain authoritarianism and bleakness Dalgleish's traits, we are given a understand from the novel, have been intensified by a tragedy in his past: the death of his wife in childbirth with the couple's only son. In television version, which is true to the original work than such problems usually are, has never been mentioned. This emotional incident is the side of the current investigation, a consequence very nearly unhelvable.

Only Roy Marsden's unimpeachable performance, like restores to the drama the like decorum it thoughtlessly relinquished over this business.

If the second episode (the book's dramatized in some parts) shows a slight falling off, too, it's largely because poor Dr Lorrimer is obliged to come out with certain phrases that have no authenticity at all outside the overwrought letter where they originally appeared. Some episode later a clue, not contained in the book in the form of a look on the murderer's face when someone makes a assumption spectacularly wide of it, marks, gets into the dramatization and nearly gives the game away. The clue was taken in the interests of clarity and concision, worthwhile objectives which have occasioned one or two other small alterations, most of them necessary and fruitful. You never lose interest in the story, a police procedural revised by P. D. James, a slight case in a disused chapter, a slight case in a disused chapter, a slight case in a disused chapter.

Brenda Primrose, discovered as a first body, quickly discovers a second one, in rather more complex circumstances, prompting the hearted women to forget the murderer's human beings after all. Actually, the career of P. D. James to make her these women speak with "supposed gentleness" within a few pages of another - and to "utter the most compassionate comments" to a "child" (She has always retained a impulse to poke fun at the extreme experiences undergone by characters; unlike certain other authors who gain their effect by refusing to distinguish between comedy and tragedy, P. D. James is disinclined to take a frivolous view of death). The television dramatization, credit too, is the careful reproduction of the author's East Anglian setting. This contributes a particular kind of realism to a piece of high class entertainment.

commentary

Speaking volumes

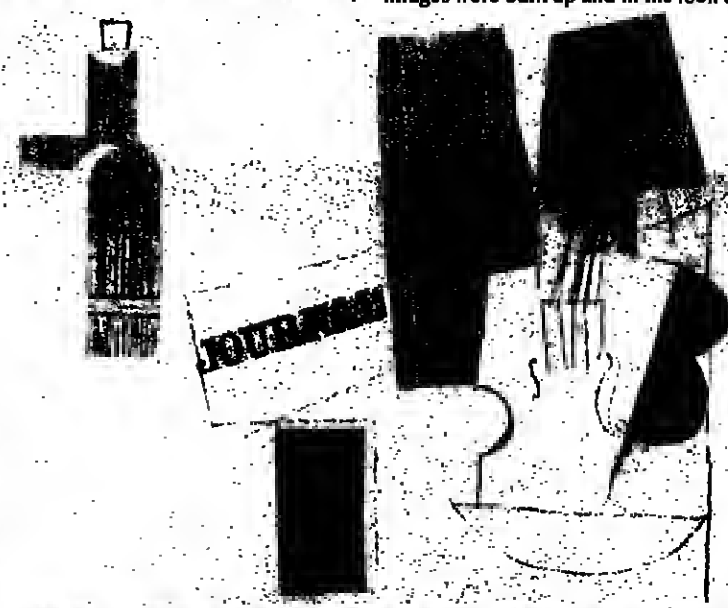
Antonia Phillips

The Essential Cubism 1907-1920 Tate Gallery

From the start, Cubism was acclaimed as a new way of representing reality, a challenge to the orthodoxy of single pointlinear perspective. It was thought of as revealing objects as we know them to be, rather than as they appear to us. But these contrasts are misleading, and likely to hinder understanding of the Cubist work of Braque and Picasso by suggesting that what these two painters were doing was applying a rival system. Of course they discarded perspective, but the products of their extraordinary *pas de deux*, especially the "hermetic" paintings of 1910-1912, defy any attempt to see in them a representational procedure as systematic as the one they rejected.

There are a number of projection systems, some more ancient, some more modern than perspective, and painters, both Western and Oriental, have used approximate versions of most of them. Cézanne occasionally appears to use oblique projection, which without being perspectival can show from no fixed point of view, an object's front, top and a side face; the represented objects gain solidity and plumpness at the price of distortion - but this, as both Ingres and Cézanne knew, could be an immensely expressive device. Braque is reputed to have been inspired by engineering drawings, which can provide a complete specification of an object's structure by showing three faces or views of it, but of course these are not usually joined together, since to do so would introduce distortions unwelcome in a technical drawing. But the pictures in which Braque and Picasso began to break down the surfaces of things into facets potentially reflecting different aspects or views show that how they faced objects was not related to an enterprise, like the engineer's, of conveying maximum information about the structure of things, so much as dictated by compositional, formal demands. Clear examples may be found among Braque's early landscapes from L'Estaque, with their Cézannesque palette of greens and ochres and piling of forms - of houses,

trees, rocks - up the canvas; or among Picasso's figures and still lifes. In "Fan, Salt Box and Melon" (1909) Picasso has beautifully dovetailed subject-matter and form: the segmented melon, its insidiously pale, echoes the fan's blades as they sweep into the cool folds of green drapery, guiding the eye down both canvas and table-top



Picasso's "Guitar, Newspaper, Glass and Bottle", *papiers collés*, 1913, from the exhibition reviewed here, and reproduced in its catalogue (by Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow. 488pp. Tate Gallery. £9.50. 0 95005 24 1).

into a medley of faceted objects nestling in crumpled cloth.

The structure of facets and volumes of these first years soon comes to be dominated - but never flattened - by one of line and tone. Where the edges of objects, or of shadows, or of planes meet, lines - but not outlines - grow; shadows continue to be displaced, shaping volumes without indicating light sources. The broken surfaces become increasingly abstracted from the solid object, and seem alternately to quiver and float or be caught like butterflies in a pyramid of intersecting planes, angles and lines. Colour drains away, leaving neutral browns and greys. Subject-matter recedes beneath this abstract skin, but survives hieroglyphically: pipe, beer glass, musical instruments, eyes, moustaches are signalled piecemeal. At the Tate the paintings of this brief and puzzling period are hung closely packed in one

room - being there induces a dizziness with both visual and intellectual roots - and the only flaw in the arrangement of the exhibition is that the drawings related to this period are not nearby, where they can clarify the paintings.

Braque's invention of *papiers collés* led to radical changes, both in how the images were built up and in the look of

structurally organize - a touch mechanically - the arrangement of planes, lines and colours. By 1914 onwards, Gris's paintings show signs of experimentation with systems of projection - perhaps as an analogue to Braque's method of arranging pieces of paper to explore compositional alternatives. What Gris seems to have done is to outline several projections of an object, tilting them fan-like across the picture surface. Rough versions of oblique and isometric projection can be recovered: the latter converts rectangular table-tops into diamonds (Nos 60, 68) and is prominent in "Harlequin Seated Beside a Table". In this painting the diamond pattern of Harlequin's clothing recurs stencilled over the larger diamond of the table (in precise isometric projection) and is repeated in the tiled floor, reminiscent of the chequerboard floors dear to Renaissance virtuosi in perspective. In "Sunblind" the front and top faces of the table mount up into the drop of a venetian blind; in "Violin and Bow on a Table" the indented wall-panelling, table-top and legs appear to be on the same vertical plane. Similar distortions occur in oriental paintings, with their shallow pictorial space and essence of viewpoint - an effect which Gris's use of tilting increases. He disguised these methods with partial occlusions, or superimpositions without occlusion (yielding no effect of transparency); or by interrupting surfaces with false attachments, and by blocking in colours where they don't belong. Gris's Cubism is a far cry from the Cubism of Picasso and Braque.

The Tate Gallery has mounted a hugely demanding and excellent exhibition. The boldness of Picasso and Braque's pre-Cubist experiments is still breathtaking - those bizarre savage figures, their bodies twisted and hatched with blue shadows (Picasso's "Standing Nude"), their mask-faces either glaring at us, as in Picasso's self-portrait, or gaping, empty-socketed. The progressive and symbiotic articulation of ideas by Braque and Picasso, with its astonishing technical inventiveness, is to be followed and studied given enough stamina. And even though "Les Femmes d'Alger" is not included in the show, there are other signs of homage to Ingres, as well as to Cézanne and African sculpture.

He was the best three-quarter I have ever seen" becomes positively zany when Kurt is played by a self-possessed twelve-year-old New Yorker, Matthew Hensell; the random conversational fragments of the wedding-guests (a technique lifted directly from Firkbank) are also very funny, and Kenneth King's Doctor and Father Christmas have a demented extravagance about them. But it is David Van Pelt's John Nower, a thick-set but athletic prefect, that dominates the performance; he combines brooding authority with callow vulnerability; his diction is clear and searching, and his major speeches achieve a startling frisson.

The years 1907 to 1929 that Auden specified are those from his own birth to the completion of *Paid*, and hint further at his identification with John Nower, in whose plight he alludes to his own attempts to find wholeness in the teachings of John Layard (whom he visited in Belgium between writing the two versions of the play), his reluctant surrender to his homosexuality and the "matrimonial" oppression which *Paid* more violently and ambivalently enacts. Its final choric vision of "Big fruit, eagles above the stream" is of an unattainable - and hence unpeopled - land of plenty and fulfillment. Playing on a further biographical irony this production accompanies Dick's departure from the Nower demagogue with the dawn sea-music from *Peter Grimes*, music envisioned by Britten on Long Island at the moment when he resolved "to leave America in a profound and creative nostalgia for home."

It must be admitted that amid all the scintillating some of the verbal detail is lost, and despite discreet amplification the problem of choric speaking is fully resolved. Auden stipulates a chorus of no more than three; here two couples address these elliptically lyrical and ironic poems to the audience in either side of the church, but too fast and without evident understanding. On the other hand the comic scene in the bar, with its English chat ("How's the Rucker going?" "Did you ever see Warner? No, he'd be before your time

confation of what he saw as the gangster-etic of Icelandic saga with the stylized ruthlessness of middle-class schoolboy ethics; he creates a dance verbal medium in which skaldic concision, obscure lyricism and parody period talk challengingly co-exist. At once provocatively allusive and self-protectively opaque, the printed text appears to defy coherent production.

Bob Holman's attempt is as successful as he is because it invests its energies in the very youthfulness of Auden's imagined world. For all its precocity, *Paid* is a work which describes the coming of age of an adolescent imagination. Like Isherwood's story "Gems of Belgian Architecture", its excitements are derived from the charged and determining experiences of youth. The argument of the play, in the final printed version, demonstrates that despite the achievement of individual wholeness - symbolized in the dream-trip to the protagonist John Nower, which is the pivot of the work - the creative powers of the family feud which reaches back into communal memory will still prevent a reconciliation with the disordered and self-destructive outer world. Yet these deep matters are set out by Auden in terms that weld together schoolboy imaginings, undergraduate read and modal psychosomatic dogma.

This exposition of a youthful crisis in the very terms of bookish youthful fantasy is actively diversified by the energetic young cast. Unable in the large space to play out their vendetta as a claustrophobic drawing-room,

Middle-class mumming

Alan Hollinghurst

W. H. AUDEN

Paid on Both Sides St Mark's-in-the-Bowery, New York City

When he lived at 77 St Mark's Place, W. H. Auden was a parishioner of St Mark's Church in the Bowery where allegedly he "couched his way through many a sermon, sitting in the back pew". One of the oldest buildings in Manhattan, the galleried neo-Classical Church is, now converted into a community centre on its central games floor the Eye and Ear Theatre present Auden's early "Charade" *Paid on Both Sides*, a mysterious American contribution to the amorphous festival, *Bright Futures* New York. There is a sense of a product of Auden's European youth in the chosen city of his later life: for the play is a work of submerged autobiography, and describes a search for wholeness and love which, with other things, was to lead Auden, a decade later, to New York itself.

Although it enjoyed many student productions it almost from its publication in 1930, *Paid on Both Sides* has remained a work to be read; like much of the poet's verse-drama of Eliot's *Waste Land* which it does follow in line, its pleasures are more literary than theatrical. Auden's many-layered, contrivance involves a

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Izaak Walton Edited by Jonquil Bevan.

This edition is the first to offer the 1853 *Compleat Angler* followed by the 1876 version, the last of Walton's lifetime, with his extensive revisions which almost double the book's length. The introduction puts the work in context, and the commentary elucidates difficult references. Illustrated £35 Oxford English Texts

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Here is an original, passionate account of the major novels of Dostoevsky. John Jones's object is always to question orthodox readings, in particular those of the editors of the current Soviet editions, and to lay bare "Dostoevsky's power to generate seemingly irreconcilable psychic energy in the form of his readers' diverse intellectual passions". £15

Fowler's Modern English Usage

Revised by Sir Ernest Gowers

'Let me beg readers as well as writers to keep the revised Fowler at their elbows. It brings with useful information, Raymond Mortimer in the *Sunday Times*. This is the first paperback edition of the 1965 revision of Fowler by Sir Ernest Gowers. £3.95 Oxford Paperbacks

Oxford University Press

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

Should you be in any doubt about the political decision you intend to make on June 9, why not make your choice on literary critical grounds? Some timely information on the literary activities of our Parliamentarians has recently appeared in a paper by Trevor Smith, of Queen Mary College, London, entitled "Men of Affairs as Men of Letters: The Literary Output of British MPs, 1935-82". He gave the paper last month at the annual conference of the Political Studies Association.

Smith has analysed four specific Parliamentary sessions since 1935, but his most important contribution is a tabulation of the literary productions of MPs in 1981-82. The authorship of MPs is difficult to categorize precisely, but Smith includes in his calculations the publication of books, pamphlets, collections of speeches, prefaces and articles contributed to group volumes. By this token some 35 per cent of MPs had publications in 1981-82, the highest number recorded in terms of both authors and titles.

The breakdown by parties is revealing politically and culturally. The Conservatives, with over a third of the Parliamentary Party as authors, have overtaken Labour in figures for literary production. This indication of a cultural shift to the right is underlined by the predominance of "dry" over "wet" writing on the Government benches. Political subjects account for 60 per cent of their titles, naturally enough, but we should also note the twelve works by David Mudd (Falmouth and Camborne) "exclusively devoted to Cornish themes".

The most prolific Labour MP was Greville Janner with thirty-six titles, mainly on legal matters; next is Tony Benn with twenty-three, and Sir Harold Wilson with twenty. Smith notes in passing of Sir Harold's publications that Richard Crossman's *Diaries* have had a distinct influence on legislative writing. Regardless of the Official Secrets Act, revelations of "unpleasant and unflattering" aspects of government are becoming de rigueur.

The Liberal Party, meanwhile, has

redoubled its efforts at the typewriter, with seven out of twelve as author MPs, though this includes Clement Freud's six titles, mostly devoted to cookery. The arrival of their Alliance partners, the SDP, during 1981 has complicated literary as well as psephological calculations. Smith notes that three of the SDP's four founders each launched a book along with the party. (Does this hint at political divisions to come?) Ironically, the European activities of Roy Jenkins, who has more claim than most MPs to a literary reputation, exclude him from Smith's calculations.

The survey has led Smith to some fascinating conclusions. The first is that, far from eroding the importance of the printed word, the electronic media have enhanced it, and as a result more MPs are writing more books and pamphlets than they did fifty years ago. Indeed the book has become the key medium for ideological debate. (Indirectly, this must be a criticism of the balanced, bogus discussions of television.) But why are MPs writing more?

Smith has some trenchant comments on the relationship between practical politics and academic political thinking. While career MPs increasingly choose "politics facilitating occupations" such as journalism, there has been a virtual disappearance of "the essentially public, politically committed university teacher". The academicization of political discussion has drained it of ideological fervour, though the rise of technocratic reformism has not meant that academics have kept out of politics. Campaigners such as G. D. H. Cole, R. H. Tawney and Harold Laski have been replaced by a new breed of politically-oriented academic: "the closet partisan who makes his contribution not as orator, party oligarch or legislator, but as a ministerial henchman drawing a salary as a temporary civil servant". These new partisans are happy to give technical advice but are not prepared to engage in larger questions of Liberty, Equality or Fraternity. Deprived of intellectual nourishment,

MPs have been driven to providing it for themselves.

I put it to Trevor Smith that by implication he was criticizing his fellow academics, regardless of party, for their lack of political engagement, and he agreed. I therefore asked him, as Head of the Political Studies Department of Queen Mary College, which party he recommended readers of the TLS to vote for. "Vote for the most thoughtful" was his reply, in what sounded like the guarded tones of a closet partisan.

One reason that Trevor Smith does not adduce for the increased literary productivity of MPs is that in 1979 they made authorship marginally more profitable for themselves by passing the Public Lending Right Act. This is a timely moment to remind you that registrations for the first tranche of PLR money, to be paid out in February 1984, have to be with the Registrar by June 30.

The first registration period for PLR - the money will be calculated on a sample of public library loans made between January and June this year - has proved controversial. In spite of the Registrar's best endeavours, registration has proved an irksome, bureaucratic process. The difficulty of tracing past collaborators, and especially illustrators, has caused delays for many. The final figures for the first period of registration may prove even more controversial: after all the fury of the PLR campaign, authors have proved reluctant to come forward to claim their due.

At the time of writing, with some six weeks to go before the registrations close, the PLR computers in Stockton-on-Tees list 5,356 authors and 48,200 books - an average of nine titles per author. This is certainly well short of the 10,000 or more authors who were expected to register, though to be fair there was no way a figure could be arrived at except by inviting applications. The Registrar, John Sumson, is reserving judgment. He expects to have some 50,000 titles registered by the end of June, and he

calculates that in any one year some 20,000 of the titles added to the Public Library stock would be eligible for PLR. "Well over half the authors that the scheme was intended to benefit - that is to say authors popular with Public Library borrowers - have registered for PLR."

Which means that probably a third of those the scheme could benefit have not bothered to apply - though registration will of course continue after June 30. There is also the possibility of a last-minute rush, and applications have picked up recently. The PLR office is hoping to stimulate applications with testimonials from such satisfied registrars as Ronald Dahl, Angus Wilson, Dick Francis and A. J. P. Taylor, but there are still plenty of authors who appear never to have heard of PLR. The final tally on June 30 could provide embarrassing ammunition for the enemies of the scheme. The Registrar of PLR is at Bayheath House, Prince Regent Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS1 8IDF.

While television appears to have had a stimulating effect on the art of political pamphleteering, what has been the influence of the medium, and in particular television arts programmes, on the arts in general? This often uneasy relationship will be the subject of a weekend conference at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on June 11 and 12.

The conference will be preceded by a two-week season of screenings of television arts programmes. This amounts to a miniature film festival, with evenings devoted to the work of John Read, the director of the first ever television arts documentary, and to auteur directors such as Leslie B. Galloway and Barrie Gavin. However the programming has produced some critical juxtapositions: an episode from the late Lord Clark's culture-consumer oriented *Civilization* will be followed by a section from John Berger's politically agonized *Ways of Seeing*.

Conference speakers include the doyen of arts programming, Melvyn Bragg (in a session chaired by the

doyenne of arts presenters, Joan Bakewell), Richard Somerset Ward, Head of BBC Music and Arts, and Michael Kristow, Arts Commissioning Editor of Channel 4. But the most established personalities and practices of public and commercial television can expect to be challenged by critics like Peter Fuller and John Wyer, both of whom are putting their ideas into practice with films for Channel 4.

Somehow television will have to break out of the hackneyed formulae that programme executives have imposed. While some art historians may have pronounced the artist's monograph and the artist's biography as critical forms, they are the staple of arts television. Television is also limited in the subject matter it chooses: performance is preferred to critical assessment, "the place" subjects avant-garde or rough-edged popular culture. (The ultimate arts programme was once dramatised in the canteen of BBC Kensington House, *Gala Trend*.)

At the conference, independent producers like Geoff Dunlop of Channel 4's *Illuminations* will argue that television has many unrealized opportunities for opening up the relationship between the medium and the arts. Television must become more a participant in the creative process, and less an embarrassed and distanced presenter.

In the meantime, what of television's financial participation in the arts? On the face of it the BBC and commercial television are important patrons of living artists. But, outside the field of music, the minority status of arts programmes gives the accounts an excuse to keep budgets low. The real difficulty, however, is that television's much more ready to exploit already hard-won creative resources than invest in the production of new ones. With very few exceptions television corporations contribute nothing beyond facility fees to the arts they present. The ICA has had financial assistance from Channel 4 in setting up this conference, but no company that it worthwhile to support the ICA as a regular basis.

Among this week's contributors

DAVID BELLOS is the editor and translator of Leo Spitzer's *Essays in Seventeenth Century French Literature*, 1983.

SIMON BLACKBURN's *Reason and Prejudice* was published in 1973.

PHILIP BRAVO is Reader in German at Birkbeck College, London.

VICTOR BRODMERK is the Henry Putnam University Professor of Romance and Comparative Literature at Princeton University. He is currently completing a book on the novels of Victor Hugo.

J. A. BURROW is the author of *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, 1982.

PERRY BUTLER's *Pussy Rediscovered* will be published in July.

RICHARD CALVOCCESI is a Research Assistant at the Tate Gallery. His *Magritte* was published in 1979.

WILL COLEMAN's study of David Jones, *The Song of Deeds*, was published last year.

GAIRN CHAM is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

ALEX DE JONCK's most recent book, *The Life and Times of Grigori Rasputin*, was published last year.

J. B. DONNE is the translator of *Gauguin's Noa Noa*, 1980.

JOHN DUNN is a Fellow of King's College and Reader in Politics at the University of Cambridge.

TERRY EAGLETON's books include *The Theory of Charles*, 1982, and *Literary Theory: an Introduction*, 1983.

CYRIL EHRLICH is Professor of Economic and Social History of Queen's University, Belfast.

HILDA R. ELLIS DAVIDSON is a Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. A revised edition of her *Scythian Mythology* was published last year.

BRIAN FOTHERGILL's books include *Beckford of Fonthill*, 1979.

CELIA HAWKSWORTH is a lecturer in Serbo-Croat at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London.

ROBERT HAWSON's *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-1980* was published in 1981.

GEORGE HOLMES is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.

MICK IMLAH's collection of poems, *The Zoologist's Bath and Other Adventures*, was published in 1982.

JOHN KEEL is the author of *The Russian Revolution: a Study of Mass Mobilization*, 1976. He is Professor of Russian History at the University of Toronto.

ROGER LOCKYER's *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592-1628* was published in 1981.

LAURENCE MARTIN is Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle. His books include *The Sea and Modern Strategy*, 1967.

VALERIE MINOQUE is Professor of French at University College, Swansea, and author of *Nathalie Sarraute and the War of the Words*, 1981.

GEORGE MIXES's *How to be Poor and Koetter: The story of a friendship* will both be published later this year.

NORMAN NICHOLSON's most recent collection of poems, *Sea To The West*, was published in 1981.

ALAN PATTERSON is the author of *The Law Lords*, 1982.

ANTHONY PHILAN is the editor of *The Western Dilemma: Argument and Action* which will be published later this year.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS's books include *Lower Than The Angels: Questions raised by Genesis 1-11*, 1983.

PETER REDKOVIC's most recent novel is *The Facilitators*, 1982.

CHARLES RYCKOFF's *The Innocence of Dreams* was published in 1979.

ROGER SCRUTON's most recent book, *The Politics of Culture*, 1981, and *Koni*, 1982.

A. W. B. SIMPSON is Professor of Law at the University of Kent.

ROBERT SKOBIELSKY is the editor of *The End of the Keynesian Era: Essays on the Disintegration of the Keynesian Political Economy*, 1977.

NORMAN STONE's books include *The Eastern Front 1914-1917*, 1976, and *Hilfer*, 1980.

DAVID SWEETMAN's collection of poems, *Looking into the Deep End*, was published in 1981.

P. D. G. THOMAS is Professor of History at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

PHYLLIS WILLIAMS's *A Green Girl*, an autobiographical study of school and work in the 1930s, will be published later this year.

The Falklands War

Sir - Geoffrey Wheatcroft in his elegant review (May 13) of the literature of the Falklands campaign rebukes me for my syntax, dotiness, and a number of otherwise meaningless, Doubtless he wrote his piece before the two investigative journalists who have actually taken the trouble to go to Lima and the Peruvian Peace Plan, Paul Foot of the *Daily Mirror* and David Taylor of BBC *Newsnight*, returned and supported what I had been saying.

In accusing me of parliamentary monomania, Wheatcroft reveals that however considerable his literary knowledge and ability, he knows nothing about the Labour Party and the House of Commons. Often one has to say things that go contrary to received wisdom twenty-three times - on the twenty-fourth occasion, people begin to take notice.

Partly as the result of the behaviour about which Wheatcroft complains, serious people are beginning to ask the question: Just why did Mrs Thatcher sack the Belgrano, without consulting the Americans, whose hemisphere relations would be affected, without checking with her own Foreign Secretary, whose stated purpose in being in Washington and New York on Sunday, May 2, was the pursuit of peace, at a time when the Belgrano and her escorts were of no threat to the fleet?

TAM DALYELL.

House of Commons.

Johnson's Dictionary

Sir - I'm sorry to be a bore about Samuel Johnson, but the reiteration by J. P. Kenyon in his review of John Burt Foster's *Johnson's Dictionary* (April 29) of the hoary legend that the purpose of Johnson's *Dictionary* was "stabilization rather than definition" gets, after a century and a half, to be pretty boring too.

I wonder whether either Kenyon or Barrett has ever glanced at the preface to the *Dictionary*, where Johnson states that his purpose is not to "form, but register" the language, and that, though he may have started with the thought that the work might "fix our language", his years of lexicographic have taught him that this is an "expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify". Or at the contents of the *Dictionary* itself, where the ninety-four different shades of meaning of the verb *to set* that Johnson delineates might lead one to speculate that he was considerably interested in definition, or, more precisely, recording current usage.

The one sentence that Kenyon gives, out of context, from Johnson's preface to Dyer, does nothing to support his view. He makes much of the phrase "retireverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture". Johnson does not say that he so annexes it. In fact, he was not in the least ashamed of his status as the son of a small bookseller, who, in spite of his final lack of success, had brought the Johnson family at least a rung or two up the ladder from grinding poverty. Johnson went out of his way to praise the members of "the Trade" as "generous, liberal-minded men". There is the story of his editorial prospective buyers at the auction of the *Thrale* (later Courage) library. "We are not here to sell a parcel of books and vats, but the potentially of growing thing beyond the dreams of avarice." And of his saying loudly to Reynolds, at a gathering where he thought their hostess was paying undue attention to a visiting duchess, "How much do you think you could get in a week? If we were to work as hard as we could?" - as if they had been common mechanics, adds Boswell, whose own snobbery, for careless readers, seems to have rubbed off on Johnson.

The "meanest naturally adorning" to trade and manufacture is a point of view, not fact, criticism. Dyer's long, irreparable set of verses *The Fleet* was an attempt to make poetry

out of the minutiae of the production and manufacture of wool - one of many unsuccessful attempts in the eighteenth century to do what the genius of Virgil had done uniquely in the *Georgics*. "Clothing and agriculture in great words," Johnson described Dyer's technique. Kenyon (or Barrett) commends the work because it "represents the woolen industry as a corporate effort in which humble weavers and shepherds, wealthy merchants and noble landowners join their labours one with another". A laudable project, no doubt, but fairly unpromising material for poetry. If Eliot, instead of writing *The Waste Land*, had put together a similar didactic work describing the day-to-day activities and corporate effort of Lloyd's Bank, it would probably have as few readers today as Dyer's *Fleet*. Nor do contemporary poets seem intent on composing epics or georgics expounding the corporate intricacies of North Sea oil production. This may indicate a false set of values on the part of readers and writers of poetry, but if so, Johnson can hardly be blamed for it.

The legend so dear to British historians that Johnson was an "elitist", authoritarian snob in his lexicography, as well as in everything else, seems to have been started by Macaulay, who, in his ignorance, thought Johnson despised history. (There is a useful book on his way to publication which will show that Johnson took history very seriously.) It has continued to be propagated by many of Macaulay's successors, notably his fellow-peer Lord Dunsford of Glanton. As good a comment as any on the continuation, by those who haven't looked at the *Dictionary*, of the tradition that its purpose is to exalt "the role of the gentleman", "the refinement of language", and so on, is the ungentlemanly and unrefined quotation from Swift that Johnson, probably with relish, gives there in illustration of the verb *to piss*: "One ass pisses; the rest piss for company."

DONALD GREENE.

Department of English, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

Freudianism and Greek Myth

Sir - At the beginning of her review of Georges Devereux's *Pennine et mythé* (May 6) Mary Leifkowitz objects to the fact that Freudians "have used Greek myth [especially] the myth of Oedipus" as a guidebook to human behaviour. Never mind that - in Sophocles' drama at least, Oedipus' problem is not his sexuality but the limitations of his (human) knowledge. For an orthodox Freudian like Georges Devereux, myth is a collective representation of the unconscious that is revealed to individuals through their dreams.

Because of the centrality of dreams in Freud's analysis of how "the basic patterns of man's emotions" are revealed; Leifkowitz might have been fair to Freud by quoting some crucial lines in Sophocles' play, part of the colloquy between Jocasta and Oedipus in the Third Episode. Here Jocasta says, "Nor should I hold dear this wedlock horrible / With thine own mother: many man there be / That in their dreams have done this act. He best / Supports his life who counts these things as naught." (Translation by Clarence Irving.) Freud has attempted to demonstrate that these things should not be counted as naught.

Moreover, while I would agree with the reviewer's argument that Devereux's interpretations of Greek myth are unduly strained in order to accommodate his prejudices, particularly what appears to be his male chauvinism, I cannot subscribe to her own prejudice which holds that no interpretation at all can be valid if it pretends to find correlations and relevances between ancient myth and the modern search for self-knowledge. The principle on which this prejudice is founded is stated in the last two sentences of the review: "The ancient Greeks wrote their myths about themselves and their society. Familiar and appealing as these stories may

remain, they were not meant to be fables for our own time." Her contention here is correct but quite beside the point. One might say with equal force that Shakespeare, Swift and Pope wrote "about themselves and their society" and that their works "were not meant to be fables for our time". But they are!

CHESTER L. RIESS.

1610 Avenue N, Brooklyn, New York 11230.

'Room's Classical Dictionary'

Sir - Adrian Room has the "amazing habit", says J. H. C. Leach in his review of *Room's Classical Dictionary* (May 20), "of citing verbs by the first person singular of the present tense, but translating them as though they were infinitives". But Adrian Room is in good company: both Liddell and Scott and Lewis and Short follow the same practice. As it saves two letters per active verb in Latin as well as in Greek, the publishers of both lexicons must have saved a lot of printing-ink since their first editions more than a century ago.

KENNETH T. DUTFIELD.

1-2 Market Square, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

'Lycidas'

Sir - The letter from Robert Barnes and others (April 8) raises intriguing possibilities.

Alastair Fowler has located ten unrhymed lines in *Lycidas*, occurring in the first nine stanzas: lines 1 (*more*), 13 (*wind*), 22 (*shroud*), 39 (*canes*), 51 (*Lycidas*), 82 (*Jove*), 91 (*winde*), 92 (*swain*), 161 (*now*) ("To Shepherd's Ear: The Form of Milton's *Lycidas*", in *Alastair Fowler (ed.), Sidney Pope (ed.), Essays in Numerological Analysis*, 1970, pp. 170-80). Employing the technique pioneered by Fowler in *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*, of isolating centrepieces, if we disregard the first word of the series, its centrepiece is *Lycidas*. Turning to the poem itself, Fowler regards the short lines as dividers and finds the centrepiece at line 102 with a sovereign image of *Lycidas*'s head:

Built in the eclipse and rig'd with curses
That sunk so low that sacred head of mine.

This structural centre with its image of sinking the seas as counterbalanced by the central stanza, vi, with the environment of Phoebe, which I find pointed up by the stanza's closing lines with their image of Jove in judgment. This seems to suggest that the couple of endwords at lines 91-2 are significant (*wind*, *swain*). To summarize the first cluster of endwords: *wind* (with a play on "winding sheet") - *shroud* - *wild-caves* are images of death, descent and burial; the last cluster winds (taking up and inverting the significance of *wind* at the beginning of the first cluster).

swain - *now* are images of Resurrection, lines 161-3 being an invocation of prayer to St Michael the Archangel, to receive the soul of *Lycidas*, thus echoing the Requiem *Offertory*, *Sed libera me a Malignis* represented out in lucis sanctorum.

To point a sharp dichotomy between classical and Christian is anachronistic. Milton was working in a recognized and consistent tradition of Renaissance neoplatonism and his treatment of classical mythology in order to integrate it into Christian faith is totally justified. Also, as his education was classical, so his poetry is nourished by classical literature, and he has found a model for this poem in the pastoral as revived and developed by Petrarch, Mantuan and Alexander Barclay. Thus the classical allusions, ushered in by the invocation to the Muses, signify King's vocation as a poet and include and identify Milton with King. They are also, in reference to shepherds, the classical and biblical allusion and Christian faith, hope and vision blend into a coherent artistic unity.

PETER THORNER.

St Saviour's Vicarage, Harley Road, London N4.

Defects in Books

Sir - I wonder if I am exceptional among your readers in finding that an increasing number of defective books are reaching the shelves in bookshops. So far this year I have had to return books no less than five times: twice because entire gatherings were lacking, once because the colour plates were out of register, once because the leaves were creased in printing, leaving broken lines of text, and infuriatingly in this instance, the replacement copy was itself imperfect, having a hole in one of the leaves.

These are serious defects: all occurred in expensive scholarly books, three published by major university presses. I have not counted those books which are shop or warehouse-soiled, nor those that are simply badly manufactured.

In all these instances the booksellers concerned have agreed to replace the defective copies without question, but this is scant compensation for the time and expense involved, especially if, as is often the case with specialist academic works, the book has gone out of print in the meantime.

I do not know what the book trade's solution will be. I for one now collate all my books as soon as I have bought them. I would urge my fellow-readers to do likewise if they wish to protect themselves against increasingly inferior merchandise being offered in the shops.

ANTHONY PAYNE.

36 Kerrison Road, London SW11.

Charles Darwin

Sir - Alan Mockay's review of, among other titles, Jeremy Cherfas's *Man-Made Life* and Paul and Anne Ehrlich's *Extinction* (April 15) contains two surprising lapses from historical fact.

First, the suggestion that Darwin "lived before atoms and molecules had been named" is true only in the trivial sense that the general public is usually unfamiliar with contemporary scientific concepts. Certainly scientists were acquainted with atoms and molecules. Reference to the *OED* shows that Paley, who wrote one of the texts set for Darwin's undergraduate degree at Cambridge, contrasted atoms with molecules in 1802 and that the modern sense of molecule was used two years later in *Philosophical Transactions*. Whewell used "atom" in its modern sense in 1837 and it is unlikely that these chemical terms were unfamiliar to the chemists who were beginning to synthesize organic molecules or to Whewell's friend and colleague Darwin, who was himself sent out of school to university in part because of the time he wasted on chemical experiments, according to his *Autobiography*.

Second, in one scientist's review of another's work it is odd to see him perpetuate the myth that the Islamic conquerors of Egypt burned the library of Alexandria, as the Ptolemaic library

had disappeared by the second-third century AD, centuries before the advent of the Arabs; the story of its burning appears to be post-Crusade or late Byzantine propaganda. The most detailed account appears six centuries after the Arab conquest in Bar Hebraeus' thirteenth-century *World Chronicle*, which was given wide currency by Pococke's 1633 translation appearing at a time when the recent suppression of Galileo's work made the rationalist-obscurantist controversies of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries which the library story illustrates dismissed as a late invention by Gibbon in another work with which Darwin, if not your reviewer, would have been familiar.

ROBERT MILLER.

American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.

Joseph Roth

Sir - I am sorry Gabriel Josipovici (Letters, May 6) in his comments on my review (April 22) of Joseph Roth's *Job* chose not to see the love and admiration I have for Roth. His use of the fairy-tale form, in particular, bracketing the harshest of realities, seems to me wonderfully ironic. As for *Job*, its "miracle" ending clearly went against the grain with Roth. To some commentators, it has carried so little conviction that they suspected him of sending it up! I don't go as far as they do, but an iconography of happiness consisting of a family smug and a son's drink advertisement is either a con or a downright facile - a rare charge against Joseph Roth, and one which I bring with due sorrow and wonderment.

On the other hand, if not having a half-declared interest in "modern rewriters of the Biblical Job story" is to be prejudiced, then I must admit I am. As to Gabriel Josipovici's general point about the value of adverse criticism, his own has always interested me a great deal.

MICHAEL HOFMANN.

11 Chaucer Road, Cambridge.

Montaigne

Sir - In her review of *Montaigne: Essays in Memory of Richard S. Tedlow*, edited by I. D. Macfarlane and Ian Maclean (May 13), D. G. Coleman makes various assertions about Montaigne and offers in proof of them "the frequency with which he comes back to words like *obliquement*, *binis*, *consanguinité* and *consuetudine*", according to R. E. Leake's *Concordance des Essais de Montaigne*, in a text of over a thousand pages Montaigne uses the words *binis* sixteen times, *glosser* three times, *obliquement* twice, and *consanguinité*, *consuetudine* and *entreglosser* once each.

CAROL CLARK.

Balliol College, Oxford.

Information, please

Jane Austen: any advice or references to the early feminist view of Jane Austen: see my *Critical Heritage* volume 1870-1940.

Brian Southam, 3 West Heath Drive, London NW11.

Crickets outside the Commonwealth: anecdotes and personal reminiscences of matches played outside the traditional cricket-playing countries: for a book, *Tales from Fox Pavilions*, now in preparation.

Leo Cooper, Allen Syngue, Pavillon Books, 196 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JL.

Rudyard Kipling: Information about letters in private hands, local and specialized: libraries, or other sources not generally known; for an edition of the letters.

Department of English, Poona College, Claremont, CA 91711. Eugene O'Neill: copies of O'Neill letters in private hands or in unlisted

or uncatalogued collections: for a selected edition of the correspondence to be published by Yale University Press.

Jackson R. Bryer, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Shogun Rustaveli: author of the twelfth-century Georgian epic poem *The Knight in the Panther (or Tiger) Skin*; present whereabouts of the fourteenth-century manuscript of the poem auctioned in London in the mid-1950s.

Nico Kiasashvili, 13 Pavlov Street, Tbilisi 60, Georgia, USSR.

un tel moment il faut la peine d'avoir vécu". His heroes discover the pleasures of reverie and memory: the exquisite nocturnal hours in the Vergy garden remembered by Julien in his cell; the enchanting evenings associated in Lucien Leuwen's mind with the sound of Mozartian horns. To be sure, Stendhal loves to slip midnight punch in salons where all the ladies have had lovers. He claims to be bored by "honest" women. But the true pleasures, he knows, are of a spiritual nature, and carry one to what he calls "le pays des idées".

If Stendhal denounces *l'esprit de sérieux*, it is not for lack of seriousness, but because he instinctively rebels against all forms of hyperbole and pretension. If he refuses to carry his head like a Holy Sacrament (the image is his), it is because he has committed himself to a struggle against all forms of counterfeit. Such a course is not devoid of courage. The world, Stendhal feels, owes us nothing; we do not have the right, no matter what happens, to inflict our misery on others. This dignity of the *homme de bien* compaignie owes much to Ancient Régime elegance which Stendhal, despite his "republican" sympathies, continued to miss all his life.

There is another form of courage which Stendhal's fictional imagination projects into a cult of energy. Julien Sorel is slender, almost frail; yet his concentrated inner strength is impressive. In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, Stendhal explains that the

kind of strength he admires can be found in an ant as well as in an elephant. This cult of energy, which Nietzsche found so appealing, informs Stendhal's passion for the Italy of the Renaissance. He does not tire of singing dithyrambs to the powerful individualism of heroic periods. Such admiration also implies a critique of contemporary society. Behind the cult of energy, individualism, and revolt, can be read a political lesson involving the diverse and often divergent meanings of the word freedom.

This lesson, too, remains paradoxical. Stendhal's passion for politics makes him watch the unfolding of contemporary history (the Revolution, the Empire, the Bourbon Restoration, the July Monarchy) as a fascinating dramatic spectacle. He joked, it is true, that politics in a novel were like a pistol shot in a concert-hall. Yet the political pistol shots can be heard throughout the pages of his books. It is as though he felt the desire to be inside history as well as the need to escape from it. Astride two centuries, having participated in the retreat from Moscow and known rapidly changing political régimes, he understood that the acceleration of events meant the tyranny of history. More keenly than any of his contemporaries, he sensed that the dialogue between the generations was becoming increasingly difficult, that the rule of ideologies made it almost impossible for fathers to understand their sons, and even for brothers to find

a common language. He knew moreover that the rule of ideologies was really the rule of the majority, of public opinion, of a despotic collectivity - anonymous tyranny *par excellence*.

This explains why the exceptional individual, and individualism, are so lovingly treated in Stendhal's writings. What is at stake is survival itself in the face of the great tides of history. Stendhal was quick to grasp that politics - especially the politics of freedom - were hardly compatible with the freedom of the individual; that it had become increasingly urgent to find ways of defending the human spirit against all deterministic pressures. So, too, in his novels did he find ways of subverting the pressures of plot and narrative authority.

How indeed was one to resist the tyrannies of history and politics? If not through strategies of subversion? How was one to protect that which one holds dear, if not through the practice of *kératisme* (defined by Gobineau, and in our time by Czesław Miłosz), the art of saying yes so as to continue thinking no, the dissident's art of survival? For open revolt has become ineffectual.

Needless to say, Stendhal is the first to recognize the risks of mental disguises and masquerades. The mask may adhere to the face. The lie can become chronic. But there is exhilaration and poetic potential in such inner freedom. To all his novels, Stendhal projects the dream of escape through the prison of privacy. His

characters readily convert their cell into a locus of meditation and freedom.

Quite remarkably for the time, this lesson in freedom extends to women as well. Madame de Réaul, Duchess Sanseverina, Lamie, represent a progressive declination of independence. Ever since his childhood, Stendhal in fact dreamt of courageous, resolute, emancipated women. He conceived of their intellectual and sexual equality with men. To be sure, such notions of equality served hedonistic impulses. But they also served a sense of human dignity - a dignity always compromised, in Stendhal's view, so long as the education of women remained an instrument of oppression.

Ultimately, however, even feminine emancipation must be seen as part of the larger paradox of Stendhalian freedom. For along with In Sanseverina, there is the sequestered fortress, enjoys the "freedom of the convent", helping to transform the France tower into the chateauhouse of *La Chaux-de-Fort*. The prison metaphor remains central to the quest for freedom. It is the space of love and of writing, the privileged mental space where language and communication can be reinvented. Does Stendhal not compare the "animal mad writer" to a silk-worm that has eaten its fill of mulberry leaves, and now needs to climb and weave its silken prison? It is in this prison-house of words that Stendhal found his true freedom.

Coproduced

David Bellos

MARY SUSAN MCCARTHY

Balzac and His Reader: A Study of the Creation of Meaning in La Comédie humaine
155pp. University of Missouri Press. £13.50.
0 8262 0378 7

Balzac (more usually, "the Balzac novel") used to be the ubiquitous whipping-boy of literary theory, the mythical location of "naïve realism", and texts were held to be intrinsically direct proportion to their distance from this last. But as the lights went out on the house of structuralism, with the publication of Barthes's *SSZ* in 1978, a new era dawned for the *Comédie humaine*. Alongside the continuing scholarly work of specialists, there has arisen, in the past decade, a new kind of writing in which Balzac ("the Balzac novel") serves to support and to demonstrate different theoretical standpoints in literary study. Barthes, or fashion, or both have transformed Balzac from a negative cultural reference into a positive and prestigious object of critical debate.

Mary Susan McCarthy's *Balzac and His Reader* is one of the by-products of this new status - not a particularly harmful by-product, but of no real use to anyone either. The reader's life is not, of course, any historical person or group, but a theoretical instance created by the text, and called upon to "coproduce" the meaning of the novel or story in question. After brief sketch of method in which the names of Wolfgang Iser, David Bleich and Norman Holland are invoked. Ms McCarthy gets down to showing how the reader's "coproduction" is tightly controlled by the author's handling of four "strategies" - metaphor, descriptive narrative structure and the device of the reappearing characters. The

argon acts in this book as a pedagogue: exercise in the deconstruction of the critic's mastery over the text. The reader's life is not, of course, any historical person or group, but a theoretical instance created by the text, and called upon to "coproduce" the meaning of the novel or story in question. After brief sketch of method in which the names of Wolfgang Iser, David Bleich and Norman Holland are invoked. Ms McCarthy gets down to showing how the reader's "coproduction" is tightly controlled by the author's handling of four "strategies" - metaphor, descriptive narrative structure and the device of the reappearing characters. The

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POETRY

Getting near the earth

Tim Dooley

PATRICIA BEER

The Life of the Laod
47pp. Hutchinson. £5.95.
0 09 150701 4

JENNY JOSEPH

Beyond Desecration
39pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.50.
0 436 22801 7

Patricia Beer's latest collection, *The Life of the Laod*, has on its cover a sepia-toned photograph of the classic English landscape: a lightly wooded valley cradling neat geometric fields, a band of houses and sheep in the foreground. The picture evokes a sentimental view of the countryside as a place of comfort and continuity which Patricia Beer's elegant and rational poems do their best to subvert. In "Farmhouse Time", for example, the four-hundred-year history of a farmhouse gives rise not to a celebratory pageant, but to a catalogue of mortality: *Man lives much longer now than he used to do. Yet all the time - once more, once less - The passing bell seems to be ringing. At night all our ghosts stand in the walls singing.*

Each wind picks straws From the descendant Of the first thatch. The cat, fed indoors nowadays, Laps like a watch.

The clock on the night storage heating Ticks like a last warning. Several of the poems in this volume explore a tension between attachment to place and specifically personal values. In "The Emigrant", the Puritan Roger Conant "born in Budleigh, Devon", resolves the conflict between

his desire to die in his place of birth and his unwillingness to abandon the religious tolerance he has found in the New World, by asking his fellow-Americans to re-name their town Budleigh. "The Simple Life", an account of the marriage of C. R. and Jaquet Asbabe, weighs the rural idylls of Arts-and-Crafts idealism against a more conventional family life, and retains a cautious ambivalence about the attractions of both:

The Simple Life is inside You, she said, wanting babies. It is not William Morris Patterns, nor gleaming hobbles, Nor that apprentice who died At twenty, the cherries Formed all along the road.

Marry me, said his wife. Hard soap and flabby candles And Edward Carpenter's Aggressive bonneme sandals Vanished. A town roof And four luminous daughters Shut out the Simple Life. The opposition between values rooted in landscape and in individual human lives is made explicit in the title poem, where the pilot of a crashing plane deliberately chooses to destroy "trees ... cattle, sheep" rather than the people of his home town:

from death He saved his people. Discerned The life of the land, and dropped.

If the attractive series of curves that make up the life of the land can contain another sort of life, what hope is there for a political stance that draws its strength from the historic struggles of those who worked the land? In "Blood will have Blood", describing a Blackpool conference singing the "Red Flag", Patricia Beer senses a politics of vengeance, a refuge of scoundrels. For her, national unity is the temporary product of crisis, something which may be drawn from a common response to the sinking of the Penlee lifeboat ("Lost") or the singing of Vera Lynn

"In wartime forty years ago" ("Some Sunny Day"). The land has no significance beyond that which the human mind or a momentary vision may lend.

The opening poems in Jenny Joseph's *Beyond Desecration* reveal a similar suspicion in the face of generalization. "The world is only in our sight", she writes (in "Descartes, you there?"), and relativistic notions affect the structure of some poems as well as providing their theme.

I stand again on the shore Where we stood and watched the waves. Or rather, since I write this I imagine us standing there.

So I sit, town-girl, and imagine Me standing by you on the shore But the vision not being a pen Me writing was only a thought.

Jenny Joseph's last two collections, *Rose in the Afternoon* and *The Thinking Heart*, were notable for their mixture of parable and realism. In this new volume, uncertainty fuels a wry, riddling humour or a melancholy longing for "Meaning and manifestation" that are "knotted far away". There is a strong awareness of the vicariousness of much human experience. In "Living off other people - Welfare", the positive side of this, the enriching aspect of imaginative sympathy, is emphasized. By looking "into other people's rooms" one can capture some of the delight of others' lives without having to take on their responsibilities.

But the interdependence of human lives can have a dark side too. William Blake's symbolic figures, the *Prophetic* and the *Devourer*, seem to haunt the extremely impressive, extraordinarily harsh visionary poems which make up the third and final section of *Beyond Desecration*. The "Man as cannibal" section of "Man as matter" is particularly memorable: its grotesque

images insisting on the connections between destruction and creation, exploitation and growth.

And see the healthy bustling prosperous man His muscles pushing the earth down. It is not beef supplies but, circling his veins

The lymph he pumps through her incestuous system. No wonder they thought up the body and See how the babe grows and the mother shrives

Five pulsing men and a little woman that bows Nearer the earth each day. And the new corn hursts

Shouldering and splitting the rod and the husk blows empty To be mashed in the mud.

Individual images of suffering and deliberate cruelty, such as the child abuse and political torture evoked in "Untitled", are disturbing enough; but more chilling still is the feeling that runs through several of these poems that such evil is permanent. The soldier climbing a mountain "to fight Winter" in "Another old tale", symbolizes the recurrent struggle to improve the lot of an individual or a society. When he dies in the attempt, the soldier appears

no more significant than a "little speck of grit". He has only dreamed of "a static called Summer, a world thought human".

In the long title poem Jenny Joseph attempts to get beyond dreams to a "Clarity more than daylight / Clarity of the long slow stare". Her vision is again a desperate one:

As if all good Were only an opposition in face of danger A shell brought out to highlight the cloud, and then

Ever a lading: and she explicitly rejects the consolations that might conventionally be opposed to such a vision:

Salvation through human love and sacrifice A dead idea, and one that works in practice Only in very limited circumstances That do not have a bearing on these people.

Both *The Life of the Land* and *Beyond Desecration* exemplify a precise attention to patterns of feeling and thought. Together they demonstrate what seriously applied intelligence and stringent moral reasoning can still achieve in poetry.

Taking licence

Mick Imlah

GAVIN EWART

More Little Ones
63pp. Anvil Press. £3.50.
85646 102 4

ALAN MARSHFIELD

The Elektra Poems
77pp. Anvil Press. £3.95.
0 85646 085 0

The second collection of Gavin Ewart's short pieces to emerge from the Anvil Press is full of surprises. Not the least of these is that so many of its contents have achieved publication. "Little Ones" are the poems that can be held in the head at once; they are instant poems, semi-conscious sections of habitual literary effort.

These are the little thoughts (often sexual), the things that pass through everybody's mind while he or she is waiting for a train or at a bus stop, walking along the street or sitting in a pub expecting the arrival of a friend. Sometimes they turn out silly, sometimes they have (I think) poetic merit. It is up to the reader to decide.

As the preface to the first collection put it: "This new collection of sixty-four pages, eighty-six poems, and only 513 lines, has taken four years to compile, though for all the evidence of selectiveness or revision it might have been done in four weeks, such is the spontaneous and exclusive character of the book. One of its several limericks wondrously ironically at an example of the author's traditional fastidiousness:

A remarkable poet is Graves he throws out far more than he saves! Each time he's collected, Verse chunks are rejected!

Yes, it's true, that's the way he behaves! We are encouraged to draw a contrast with Ewart's own licentious behaviour. He uses the Anvil Press as a rather stylish substitute for the bin. It is hardly necessary to confirm his own expectations that some of these highbrow doodles will be found "silly" or simply bad - the floppy trolleys, for example, while others pack almost the whole force of his famous nimble humour.

The funniest of the poems are splendidly rude. There is no more charming exponent of bad language in writing today, and his venom is always nicely expelled. But the tone of the book is as varied as its technique, as is shown by a quick scan of its one-line poems. Beside the quirky ("A Possible Line of Kipling, Concerning George MacBeth: He's a gentleman of Scotland, living south") and the crudely minimal ("Sbe's mean and full of minge-water") there is "The Death of a Mother" with its shock of pathos ("So pitiful and small, such skin and bone") and the unexpected epi-

sweep of "Resurrection": "On the Last Day the wrecks will surface all nvar the see." (All of these, of course, are memorable, because there is only one line to remember.) Poems like "Divorced Women in Dormitory Towns" (twelve lines) and "Spring Song" (nine) are melancholy observations whose affective power belies their miniature scale. There is even an explicit yearning to vault littleness in the "Ambition" harboured for an unwritten poem: "I want it to be / a statutory legend in its lifetime / built to outlast the twittering birdlike critics." The placing of this in an assortment of trivial successes and forgettable failures is a typically good joke.

Also from Anvil come the weighty *Elektra Poems* of Alan Marshfield - the first full collection of twenty years' work. Marshfield is another poet for whom sex is the central subject, but his language is bad in a different sense. He avoids pliant words and direct syntax with a monotonous array of unnatural invention whose effects are often obscure or ugly: a line like "Clothed in crease from new duck pants to smile" draws faint and ineffectual associations between uninteresting objects in crabbed and grotesque language. Some subjects resist this treatment more vigorously than others, and Marshfield makes sex look like one of them. The action of "Sleep, Silhouette", for example, is presented in verse which manages to be both over-elaborate and grossly predictable:

my ambassador fingers grow aware liquidity means use, meant readiness. I was not marginal; dent close - scoring your prelude whistler - stung your red interior with slinging pains; longer joys scattering then, until from crotch to chin our sweaty bodies held and we arrived, grating breast to breast

This dreadful passage is not, alas, the only thing of its kind. "To Sbe's of Mortality" has a narrator who snouts around his girl-friend's body like a badger to approve her rankest odours with his deplorably sensitive "olfactory entrances". A poem which sticks to the mind.

Better than these, though all but incomprehensible, is an Egyptian monologue, "Ta-hes Visits her Tomb". This shows its painstaking erudition through sentences of esoteric, faintly comic brevity:

Leaping down to the last mastaba? If you must.

Children, that's a canonic jar. Not "Love Story", the sequence of eight poems with which the book opens, is less mannered than most of it, and its sexual metaphysics have the base of a fully portrayed relationship on which to gather interest. The narrator's consideration of his use of a young girl ("dear duncie", he calls her) is undertaken with a robust suggestion of self-loathing.



Waving at Marcel

Valerie Minogue

JACQUES BERSANI, MICHEL RAIMOND and JEAN YVES-TADIE (Editors)

Etudes proustiennes, IV: Proust et la critique anglo-saxonne
344pp. Paris: Gallimard. 160fr.
2 07 024828 3

DERWENT MAY

Proust
85pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95 (paperback, £1.75).
0 19 287612 0

Surveying the history of Proust's reception in England in the latest issue of the *Cahiers Marcel Proust*, Robert Gibson captures both the flavour and the variety of the critical controversy which the novel excited. Mary Dalrymple (née Robinson), in 1913, is the first listed English reviewer of Proust; but to Richard Aldington goes the honour of writing the first article of "real quality". In 1920, among the early English critics, here is the most perceptive. Katherine Mansfield, wrote in December 1921 that she and her husband had just spent two weeks living and breathing Proust, to the point where she felt her own possibilities foreclosed - a feeling deflected by Virginia Woolf in 1922 when, after expressing her rapture, she wondered who could possibly be left to write. Murray represented England in the special issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* published in January 1923, after Proust's death, and three days later provided a long study of "Proust and Modern Consciousness" in *The Times Literary Supplement*. The

first commemorative volume of essays appeared in 1923 under the editorship of Scott-Moncrieff, whose *Sivann's* Why had appeared in 1922. It was a mixture of praise and blame - Arnold Bennett censured Proust's interminably rambling sentences, while George Moore compared him to a man trying to plough a field with knitting-needles.

When Professor Gibson laments the passing of the era of "amateur" critics like these he will have many sympathizers, now that a dour academic criticism has largely taken over. But the history of Proust in English is also one of taste and fashion. One generation of critics favours the tracing of affinities (as Petronius or Dickens), another stresses the social chronicle, like Edmund Wilson, who saw Proust as both historian and symptom of a crumbling civilization.

The late Rebecca West, only a year or so after the war, called Proust "a great political novel", memorably dismissed much of the rest as "maunderings when eating a bun". D. H. Lawrence denounces Proust's "infatuation with triviality", while Aldous Huxley's Anthony Beavis, in *Essays in Criticism*, describes Proust as one who not only drinks but gorges with his bathwater. On the subject of homosexuality, in the early 1920s, avant-garde admirers fell back in dismay, while the reaction to Albertine ranges from exuberant boredom to outraged morality or charges of confusion and duality. To Cyril Connolly goes Gibson's prize for being the most beastly to Proust; his *Horizon* editorial (in 1941) presents him as a pathological case: cruel, snobbish, indecisive, cowardly and verbose.

After 1949 comes the era of the professionals, on whose plentiful contributions Gibson limits himself to

a few brief comments. This survey is followed by five articles on Proust by British academics. Ninette Bailey provides a logical and convincing application of Philippe Hamon's concept of "closure" to *A la recherche*, while R. G. Vaasey makes an ingenious but to my mind less convincing analysis of the role of the "pyramid" image. Richard Boles discusses the controversial status of *Le Temps retrouvé* as a reflection of Proust's aesthetics, and Allison Finch, an acknowledged expert on Proust's manuscripts, provides a well-documented and persuasive response to Feuillebar's suggestion that Proust had impoverished his novel by extensive cuts in the lyrical and descriptive passages. Margaret Mein suggestively outlines Proust's symbolic treatment of wings, flight and aviation. Philip Kolb (who else?) introduces more than thirty letters from Proust to his friends and family, and a selection of his drafts of "Le docteur Ravolot" from Proust's notebooks, with detailed commentary. There is also an updating of Raimond's bibliography to cover the years 1975-77.

To pass from the *Cahiers* to Derwent May's *Proust* volume is to move into a decisively English sphere. In the literary editor of the *Litérature*, himself a novelist, addresses himself primarily, in the wake of Terence Kilmarth's revised translation, to new readers of Proust. It is an uneven study, both in style and content. Mr May's short, bald and at times almost aggressively simple sentences make a strange contrast with Proust's own rhythmic constructions. May's opinion, by attacking the strip-tease image of a Proust who fell into bed and ate, but his further comment that

"What people who have not read it find so often to be real is that it is a great comic novel" testifies abundantly to the existence of a purely notional "Proust" so obstinate that a critic must address himself to the "failures of realisation" of non-readers.

May gives a thumb-nail sketch of Proust's life and background, and then directs our attention to that "triumph over superlatives" which characterizes the novel. A brief summary of the "story" provides some instant landmarks, and thereafter the book addresses itself to most of the novel's major themes. To cover so much in this short space demands compression. Proust's characters are described as "consistent within themselves" (which does not mean predictable) in every aspect of their behaviour; this begs so many questions as to mislead, while a page on Baudelaire as precursor is a scramble in which quotations are wrong, misquoting and where a mis-translation of "flânerie" as "flâner" (flâner is used here in the sense of "pennant" or "flag"). It is at such moments that one senses May has made somewhat hasty raids on the available scholarship.

But he effectively distinguishes Marcel the narrator from Marcel the protagonist, and both from their creator. His book gives a good impression of the depth, the variety, the social and psychological perceptiveness, and the great comic verve of Proust's novel, stressing the way we are led into moral self-awareness and self-criticism by a means that is peculiar to the novel, and that represents its supreme moral power. As an "amateur" critic, Derwent May is not weighed down by erudition, but neither does he have quite the agility or accuracy of the expert.

Intended to provoke

Philip Brady

BERTOLT BRECHT

Gedichte aus dem Nachlass
Band 1, 1913-1932
Band 2, 1933-1956

Edited by Herta Ramthun
52700, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

It is over thirty years since Max Frisch accorded Brecht the rank of a literary classic — a backhanded compliment, since classic to Frisch meant ineffectual. Frisch had a point — two points, in fact, for few would deny the ranking and none would deny that the world has indeed remained largely unaffected by Brecht's desire to provoke thoughts of change. But in those intervening thirty-odd years it is Brecht himself, or at least our picture of him, that has changed. At his death the bulk of his work was unpublished. He had been more seen and heard than read, associated more with the Berliner Ensemble's productions than with words on the page. Over the years the works have been printed — first, the plays and the writings on theatre, then some of the poetry. In 1967, eleven years after his death, a "collected" edition was published. There followed the so-called working-journal, the early diaries, the letters, the film-scripts and film-sketches. But now, to hazard a prediction, we have reached the end of the major surprises with two volumes containing over 700 poems and fragments of poems, of which the vast majority have never before been published.

It is appropriate that Brecht the poet, not the dramatist, has sprung this last and greatest surprise. As a dramatist, Brecht supplies guidance, states aims, prescribes techniques, attempts model-productions and, in helping actors and producers, helps his readers and audiences, even at the risk of arming them with the odd ready-made label. Brecht the poet, however, was committed to the notion that poetry needs no glosses. He can, indeed, be positively misleading: what looks, for instance, like a studied casualness towards his own poetry is at least in part the serious poet in flight from neo-romantic posturing.

But there are clues to his intentions: his stated preference for a "Basic German" in poetry, his admiration of the "marvellous concreteness" of Greek epigrams, his rejection of a poetry in which "associations were formed rather than actual thoughts" — these, if they do not add up to that argumentative strain and the all-pervasive vividness in his later poetry. But they are still no more than clues. Moreover, when it came to the poems themselves, Brecht, who claimed to have found "new paths for certain of poetry's"

social functions", was not unduly anxious to display his finds in public. He published very little of his vast output, and that little — collections carefully selected and strategically arranged — gave what now appears as an unnaturally clear and consistent outline to his growth as a poet. The bulk remained hidden from sight.

the blushing sort Brecht might well have blushed at the sixteen-year-old schoolboy penning patriotic fustian for the Augsburg papers — they loyally published it — by naming "this blither but holy strife". But then that same schoolboy was within eighteen months attacking war and praising broad hips and bottoms swaying in the blue of

poem as "on the way from Augsburg to Timbuctoo" and, if he never quite left Augsburg, he also never quite reached Timbuctoo, preferring, it seems, to keep one eye on the exotic, the other on the earthly familiar (how convenient, for instance, that German allows him to rhyme "Kyrie Eleison" with "bums"). "Vitalität" was the craze, its ethos summed up in lines such as: How good a piss to piano-music / How blissful a poke in the wind-wild reeds. The exuberance can quickly pall, but it is fascinating to see Brecht's developing distance and irony, controls which were to be so important later. He is adept at trimming the sensualist ethos down to a simple unsightliness:

But one time she relaxed
Then got a child in rubber shoes
A case unprecedented.

Any unsolicited visit to the poet's workshop is going to bring us face to face with all the bric-a-brac of false starts and rejected versions, and there are plenty of these here. Brecht was by nature a begetter of provisional designs and fragments, countless bits and pieces to be worked over later. Unfulfilled intentions are disclosed; we have, for instance, verses for a planned play on David, part of a projected cycle of poems on medical discoveries, lines for a version of the *Divine Comedy*, for a play with chorus called *The Truth Messenger*.

Sometimes, however, the intentions were fulfilled. We can now see what was discarded en route. There are, for instance, few more brilliantly sustained ironic attacks on tyranny and propaganda than the *German Stripes* against Hitler which Brecht published in the late 1930s. The left-overs and trial-runs are revealing in themselves — the spiky forms are there, but not the vivid, witty twists of argument. Again, at the beginning of the 1930s, Brecht had published a quite different kind of cycle — ten bitter, matter-of-fact monologues urging naked self-interest in the dog-eat-dog world of the cities. The present volumes not only contain other poems which are, or could be, part of the same project, they also show how consistently Brecht was working in those years at a kind of pared-down verse language, risking a prosaic flatness as a means of provocation:

I am his enemy: he just
Doesn't know him.
I am his cup.
I Don't help him to earn I.
Live in his room, I
Wear his clothes, I live
On him.
He will recognise me soon, he
Will get rid of me. He will
Move out.

The poem is undisturbed, but the compactness, the deadpan manner, were to become almost second nature to Brecht during the 1930s. Now at least we can see the work involved.

Besides the discarded parts, however, there are new wholes to be found here. That is to say, there are cycles and sequences which can be read complete, or near-complete, for the first time. The Koloman-Wallach Cantata, a lengthy sequence of eleven poems in a spare, folksong idiom, celebrating an Austrian worker who after leading violent political disturbances in 1934, has only been known through a nine-line fragment. Now the whole is available and, although it is as much a simple as simple, it is unlike any other sequence by Brecht. The *Herrnburg Report*, a cantata written for a Youth Festival of Peace in 1954 and hitherto known mainly by ill-repute, turns out to have deserved that ill-repute — whether Brecht is alone responsible for the crude tub-thumping is, however, a question not raised by the editor, whose notes on this piece, as elsewhere, leave much unexplained.

And there is another cycle, more an interrupted work-in-progress perhaps, first referred to in September 1961 when Brecht revealed "to Helene Weigel in a letter that, when otherwise unoccupied, he had taken to writing 'pornographic' sonnets. The result is too distanced by their technical virtuosity, too aware of the interplay of stilet form and liberated content, simply too good to be anything like pornographic. Brecht, when he is celebrating sex in sonnets, seems ultimately to be celebrating the sonnet almost as much as the sex."

The young tearaway had spoken up in 1920 for "poems that knock out one or two of the listener's teeth." Poems lost, mislaid, or for other reasons unpublished cannot knock out many teeth and are unlikely to do so now that they are finally let loose on a world which has — to recall Frisch again — made of Brecht a tame classic. In any case Brecht cooled down, and one of the great advantages of this edition is that we can watch him doing so. But coolness was never meant to spell innocuousness or neutrality, it was simply a better potential weapon than verbal upper-cuts. And it is another great advantage of this edition that we can watch Brecht making poems weapons. The targets can be varied indeed, but the pugnacity is constant. It is there at the end of the world before his death Brecht composed with the decision of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, took on Stalinists and fledgling anti-Stalinists at the same time in four argumentative little poems. And, less seriously, the pugnacity can be seen in the sides and the interthoughts: in Zürich in 1946 Brecht wrote a sonnet entitled "Sonne und Sex". When it's over, your partner wields the birch-twig and he ends: "You sweat the whole back (as Goffke) out of your back. Underneath the last line he wrote "Thomas Mann".

The author's own uneasiness registers in the occasional shift of metaphor from mosaic-stone to "current coin within the economy of the book". The systematic links between such recurrent materials do become clearer, however, when they are derived from a common source, be it the Bible, the French Revolution, or the works of Karl Marx. The rather old-fashioned idea of "themes" does not sit easily to what sounds like a crash course for *Mastermind*, but after some juggling with "thematic zones", "thematic cluster", and "thematic complex" (not to mention a "knot of thematic details"), Minden manages to fix a number of Schmidt's preoccupations, including: the relations between sex and creativity, the status of the West German Federal politics since the war. This is very valuable. The reader can go back to K.A.F.F. certain of distinguishing important motifs from the mass of detail, and since so much of this is illuminated he may well be ready to do a bit of exploring on his own account.

This reader — Minden's as much as Schmidt's — is a major problem, however. The author may hope to extend the debate about and interest in Brecht, within the English-speaking world", but in spite of Marion Boyer's heroic publication of an English *Gedichteauswahl* (The *English Brecht*), his work is scarcely known here — perhaps least of all on the matter of the systematic links between such recurrent materials do become clearer, however, when they are derived from a common source, be it the Bible, the French Revolution, or the works of Karl Marx. The rather old-fashioned idea of "themes" does not sit easily to what sounds like a crash course for *Mastermind*, but after some juggling with "thematic zones", "thematic cluster", and "thematic complex" (not to mention a "knot of thematic details"), Minden manages to fix a number of Schmidt's preoccupations, including: the relations between sex and creativity, the status of the West German Federal politics since the war. This is very valuable. The reader can go back to K.A.F.F. certain of distinguishing important motifs from the mass of detail, and since so much of this is illuminated he may well be ready to do a bit of exploring on his own account.

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Lustily to war

George Holmes

MICHAEL PACKE

King Edward III
Edited by L. C. B. Seaman
318pp, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£12.35.
0 7100 9024 2

It is true that, as L. C. B. Seaman says in his preface to this book, which he edited and completed after the author's death in 1978, Edward III has been neglected by biographers. The reasons are obvious. His reign was very long and his personality appears to have been totally lacking in oddity or enigma. A man whose childhood ended when his homosexual father was brutally murdered by his unfaithful mother's friends ought to have been unbalanced in some way. Edward, however, died fifty, mostly glorious, years later in the arms of an attractive mistress, and venerated by the whole nation. He was apparently not quite simply a highly successful king and therefore boringly unaccounted for when compared with, say, Richard II or Henry VIII. There is no recent biography. Michael Packe had the reasonable idea of supplying one.

Nevertheless, although Edward III as a personality has not excited great interest, there has been a considerable amount of relevant historical writing of

which Packe did not take sufficient notice. Perhaps the most massive contributions of the twentieth century are the third volume of T. F. Tout's *Chronicles in the Administrative History of Medieval England* (1928), in which he substantially rewrote the domestic history of the reign, and G. L. Harris's *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England* (1975). Neither of these appears in the bibliography, though many less useful works do. No one can understand the circumstances in which Edward acted without taking account of the institutions described in these books. Though he made good use of May McKisack's volume in the *Oxford History of England*, Packe's book is weak on that side. He has read the original chronicles, he has dipped into the record sources and embellished the narrative from a rather random collection of secondary works on relevant topics. What results is an unoriginal but lively narrative of the obvious events, with a bias towards the story of the campaigns in Scotland and France.

The book contains one piece of original research on an intriguing subject to which prominence is given: according to the contemporary French chronicler Jean Le Bel — the story is mentioned in no English source — Edward III raped the Countess of Salisbury, the wife of one of his foremost comrades in arms, William Montague, Earl of Salisbury. Le Bel's story is that Edward fell in love with the

lady when he visited a castle held by her husband in the course of his wars with the Scots. The castle, it has been presumed, was Warke-on-Tweed and the encounter took place during the campaign of 1341. Edward then summoned the Earl and Countess to attend a tournament so that he could continue the acquaintance. There were tournaments in 1342. The rape is said to have taken place later in 1342 in the absence of the Earl from the country on an expedition to Brittany. On his return the Countess confessed to him. Heart-broken, he divided his lands with his wife and went abroad again to fight the Moors in Spain, where he died.

There are a number of elements in this story which make it demonstrably untrue as it stands: Warke-on-Tweed was defended by a nephew of the Earl called William, who did not exist; the Countess is called Alice while in fact her name was Catharine; the Earl did not die in Spain. But there is enough true knowledge involved in the story to make one doubt whether it is totally imagined: the Earl did have a castle on the Scots border, he did later go crusading in Spain, and so on. Antonio Granden, who investigated the matter in a penetrating short article published in the *English Historical Review* in 1972, concluded that it should probably be placed in the category of French war propaganda designed to brand the English as unchivalrous aggressors, to which *The Vow of the*

Heron belongs. She also suggested, interestingly, that the structure of the story might owe something to a knowledge of Livy's account of the rape of Lucretia. Packe seems to have missed Dr Granden's article, which remains the best account of the matter, but he has one suggestion of his own to make. The Earl of Salisbury had a brother Edward Montague whose wife was called Alice. She was of a suitable age in the 1340s. Her life ended in 1351 in very peculiar circumstances: she died, according to an indictment which survives, as a result of being beaten by her husband, who aroused the same period was also involved in other disreputable episodes of brigandage but was later pardoned and resumed the normal life of a member of the lesser nobility. Packe suggests that the king's victim was this Alice Montague, that the affair was hushed up and that Le Bel reports a garbled version of the story with truth in it.

Though he draws our attention to an interesting and perplexing case of noble murder in Edward Montague, the probability, alas, is that the rape story was invented and that King Edward can be convicted of nothing worse than a prevalent atmosphere of hunt-bull high-jinks at court, which English chroniclers and clerical critics also indicate, and of course the understandable submission of on aged widower to the charms of Alice Perrers. The desperate attempt to make Edward III interesting fails.

What remains is the world of Froissart: the many hard and glorious campaigns of Edward and his sons, the brilliant court. On all popular writers about Edward III and his times Froissart exercises a fatal fascination. His transference to the real world of contemporary courts and battlefields of the values of chivalric romance of course mirrored an aspect of the ideology of politics which really existed. But a medieval king was a politician, personage and his life demands analysis of the political structure in which he lived. It is unfortunately characteristic of much popular history of this period that Packe gives a lengthy and picturesque account of the Black Death but largely ignores the dramatic changes in the structure of politics which the plague had already caused before Edward died.

There is a political biography of Edward III waiting to be written. Mr Packe, agreeable writer as he is in detail, is trapped like many others in a romantic vision of "an age when war still had a certain lusty innocence". So his book becomes, a kind of modern rendering of Froissart's episodic chronicle, lacking Froissart's authenticity. Without a realistic setting in social and political structure history really does become "just one damned thing after another". If reading that kind of narrative appeals to one, one will enjoy this book; and if not, not.

Turning to taxation

P. D. G. Thomas

JOHN L. BULLION

A Great and Necessary Measure:
George Grenville and the Genesis of
the Stamp Act 1763-1765
317pp, University of Missouri Press.
£18.
0 852 0375 2

George Grenville, one of Britain's least-known prime ministers, has recently attracted growing attention, soon to culminate in the first biography of him, by Philip Lawson. For Americans Grenville has never been obscure; his name will forever be linked with the Stamp Act taxing Britain's colonies in 1765. This is the narrow subject of John L. Bullion's study, which does not embrace even the other colonial measures of Grenville's ministry.

The source materials for this topic are scanty, so how did Professor Bullion contrive to produce a book of 300 pages? He does not claim to have found any significant new facts, and avowedly bases his book on "a careful study of the language of the familiar sources". This is done exhaustively and exhaustingly, and not only because Bullion believes in dotting the i's and crossing the t's. All too often the same facts and, the same quotations, are repeated, in slightly varying contexts. He has erected a large edifice on a slender foundation of evidence; and although his detailed handling of the evidence carries the hall-mark of a historical craftsman, it hardly bears the weight of the interpretations he puts upon it. The book is almost a work of logic rather than one of history, based on the premises that man act in a rational and consistent fashion, that men in this case being Grenville, his colleagues and subordinates.

Bullion employs a whole squad of weasel words to sustain his argument, adverbs like "probably", "apparently", and the horrible "doubtlessly", and such verbal constructions as "would", "could", "must", and "may".

Typical is his account of the Bute ministry's discussion of colonial taxation early in 1763. He admits that the "evidence" exists, and in fact produces none directly relevant. This advantage does not prevent him from concocting a description of the minister who probably would have been concerned in such discussions and the conclusions they must have come to, a performance that might deceive the unwary reader into thinking it a survey

of actual events. All through the book one is left with the feeling that a great deal of what Bullion produces as hypothesis probably did happen in much the way he suggests, but of hard evidence there is very little. Logical exposition is no substitute for documented research. Who was it who said that it is easier to write philosophy than history?

Two aspects of Bullion's methodology are particularly disturbing. Sometimes he argues from the absence of evidence, assuming that lack of knowledge of what Grenville thought or said or did on certain occasions meant that Grenville did not then speak or act. The requisite scholarly qualification, "as far as it is known", would usually have weakened the force of the point he was making. On one occasion he compounds this fault by denying the survival of evidence that does exist. He makes this claim about a report known to have been sent to Lord Bute by his secretary Charles

Jenkinson of the important Commons debate of March 18, 1763, on the molasses duty. Yet this report is in the Bute MSS, formerly at Cardiff and recently transferred to the present Lord Bute's home at Mountstuart, one of the manuscript collections disregarded by the author and a fairly obvious place to look.

A more serious flaw in Bullion's methodology is his supplementing the strictly contemporary evidence by the interpolation of arguments culled from later speeches and pamphlets. It is dangerous to assume that the motives afterwards publicly proclaimed with the advantage of hindsight were those of the Grenville ministry at the time. The picture Grenville gave in 1766 of his motives for postponing the Stamp Act two years before does not accord with what is known of his thinking in 1764. Bullion himself is aware that what Grenville later said about his molasses duty was misleading. Yet he is heavily

dependent on this mode of scholarship throughout his book.

What fresh light is thrown on the British policies that led to the American Revolution? Very little. There are different shades of emphasis and opinion, and a few quibbles that arise sometimes from ignorance of British political and parliamentary practice. To give, but one example, Bullion does not appreciate that the 1764 suggestion of John Hume (an American) that the Stamp Bill should be read twice by the Commons and then sent to America for consideration was constitutional nonsense — the Bill would lapse at the end of the parliamentary session. The procedure adopted, of a formal resolution, served Huske's purpose, yet Bullion makes a meal of the difference.

Although Grenville dominates the book, the character portrayal of him, based on a short period of two or three years, does not ring true in the longer

perspective of his career. Bullion describes Grenville as a political gambler, apparently because in 1772 he jeopardized, and in 1765 sacrificed his political future by his uncompromising attitudes. Grenville was a man identified by his contemporaries as a solid rock of dependability, not as another Charles Townshend. To imply that he was a gambler in his American policy is pure nonsense. Bullion himself continually reiterates that Grenville's colonial taxation was based on the belief that the stamp duties would be self-enforcing in the face of all American objections. Grenville's assumption of low-abiding American behaviour was to prove unfounded, and in a turnaround final chapter he is blamed for lack of knowledge of the colonial scene as "the author of all the troubles in America". Professor Bullion ought to apply to his overall thinking the remorseless logic he employs in processing his detailed evidence.

Around the lumber-room

Anthony Phelan

M. R. MINDEN

Arno Schmidt: A Critical Study of
His Prose

283pp, Cambridge University Press.
£15.50

The pressures of Arno Schmidt's novels and short stories not unlike those of a commonplace book, one found in recognition of the familiar and discovery of the unusual. As so much remained unfamiliar, academic work on Schmidt in West Germany has long been industrialized in the collective labour of identifying the welter of quotation and reminiscence in which his later works, particularly abundant. The house-journal of the Schmidt-depshers, the *Bürgerliche Boie*, has hence tended towards a "palaeontologist's approach". Michael Minden is as good a "Sherlock Holmes of philology" as the next man — and he doesn't mind telling us that his finds anticipated those of the *Boie*; but the great merit of his book is that he is willing to go beyond these factual and statistical investigations and to offer

instead an argued survey of Schmidt's work from *Leviathan* (1949) to *Abend mit Goldrand* (1975), without losing sight of the intricate network of details.

The book works on two fronts. Part One examines Schmidt's handling of narrative, the construction of his fictional world, and his preoccupation with the relation of the novel to the world of prose-forms. In practice, Schmidt's subversion of narrative convention are supposed to produce a more thorough representation of the "present world". Because the perceiving mind needed to be included in this enterprise, the "consistent" naturalism of his early work moved towards an interior "Sekundendstil", until, finally, flights of the imagination and eruptions of the unconscious more or less displaced any empirical *domäne*. The ultimate ground of this realism is personal, an autobiography with Words and all, as Schmidt might have put it. Nevertheless, that is a kind of realism and Minden's account is accordingly at the best a bit of a "palaeontologist's approach". On the other hand, the book could well do without a number of more fashionable terms — gestures, writings, levels of integration, marks, and

signatures — which repeatedly dress up remarks without ever yielding a consistent theory.

The second part of Minden's study concentrates on a single text, *KAFKAsuch Mare Crisium*, published in 1960 and so at the threshold of Schmidt's later interest in Freud and Joyce. In discussing chapters Minden extends his attention to the details and through their arrangement in "mosaics" until finally certain "themes" are discerned. Schmidt is most happily encyclopedic among years of accumulated intellectual bric-a-brac but, occasional fits of temper apart, Minden patiently pursues three of the smallest forms of Schmidt's work: records of vocabulary, the ready-made of cultural allusion, and the *curiosae* or notions treasured by the *bricoleur*. Although it might have helped, to identify these "consciousness-centers" in constructed sequences and in some sort of hierarchical order, Minden settles for Schmidt's own suggestion, "mosaics", patterns which rely locally on abstract geometrical forms but which also add up to a mimetic whole. Yet "pattern" seems a rather premature judgment of what is in effect a repellent series.

The author's own uneasiness registers in the occasional shift of metaphor from mosaic-stone to "current coin within the economy of the book". The systematic links between such recurrent materials do become clearer, however, when they are derived from a common source, be it the Bible, the French Revolution, or the works of Karl Marx. The rather old-fashioned idea of "themes" does not sit easily to what sounds like a crash course for *Mastermind*, but after some juggling with "thematic zones", "thematic cluster", and "thematic complex" (not to mention a "knot of thematic details"), Minden manages to fix a number of Schmidt's preoccupations, including: the relations between sex and creativity, the status of the West German Federal politics since the war. This is very valuable. The reader can go back to K.A.F.F. certain of distinguishing important motifs from the mass of detail, and since so much of this is illuminated he may well be ready to do a bit of exploring on his own account.

This reader — Minden's as much as Schmidt's — is a major problem, however. The author may hope to extend the debate about and interest in Brecht, within the English-speaking world", but in spite of Marion Boyer's heroic publication of an English *Gedichteauswahl* (The *English Brecht*), his work is scarcely known here — perhaps least of all on the matter of the systematic links between such recurrent materials do become clearer, however, when they are derived from a common source, be it the Bible, the French Revolution, or the works of Karl Marx. The rather old-fashioned idea of "themes" does not sit easily to what sounds like a crash course for *Mastermind*, but after some juggling with "thematic zones", "thematic cluster", and "thematic complex" (not to mention a "knot of thematic details"), Minden manages to fix a number of Schmidt's preoccupations, including: the relations between sex and creativity, the status of the West German Federal politics since the war. This is very valuable. The reader can go back to K.A.F.F. certain of distinguishing important motifs from the mass of detail, and since so much of this is illuminated he may well be ready to do a bit of exploring on his own account.

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Rumours of Romanism

Roger Lockyer

CAROLINE M. HIBBARD

Charles I and the Popish Plot
342pp, University of North Carolina Press, £21.
0 8078 1520 9

In his opening speech to the Long Parliament, in November 1640, John Pym asserted that "there is a design to alter law and religion. The party that affects this are papists, who are obliged by a maxim in their doctrine, that they are not only to maintain their religion, but also to extirpate others." This belief in the existence of a popish plot to destroy the Protestant religion and to replace it by Catholicism was so constitutional that it drove a substantial

compelling that it drove a substantial scolding the authority of Charles I, and thereby opened the way to civil war. Subsequent generations of historians have tended to dismiss the "Catholic conspiracy" as a myth, yet it popery presented no real threat either to the English church or to English liberties, why was the political nation so obsessed with it? Part of the answer is that anti-Catholicism was, like anti-semitism today, an irrational and paranoiac impulse. But Caroline Robbins, by taking a close look at what was happening in and around Charles I's court in the closing years of the

personal rule, has shown that fears of Catholic conspiracy were founded on something more substantial than mere bigotry. Indeed, there was not one "popish plot" but several. Queen Henrietta Maria, for instance, had established her household as a mission centre which was actively proselytizing among the court aristocracy. Spanish and French ambassadors were active in promoting their connections with English Catholics, hoping to derive political advantage from them. But most disturbing of all from the point of view of ordinary English Protestants was the presence in London of a resident papal agent, George Con, sent over in 1636 to act as the co-ordinator of the various Catholic endeavours which it was hoped might lead to the return of England to the papal fold.

Protestantism, of course, was deeply rooted in English society by the seventeenth century, yet events on the Continent had shown how determined action on the part of Catholic rulers could change the religious complexion of a state. Charles I's subjects had therefore good reason to be apprehensive when they saw the dateliner of their faith married to a Catholic, holding daily discussions with the papal agent, and angling for an alliance with Spain, traditionally the most uncompromising of all Catholic powers. Was Charles himself a Catholic? The question might seem absurd in view of the fact that he died a

self-proclaimed martyr for the Protestant Church of England. Yet he never subscribed to the popular belief that the Pope was Antichrist, and he longed to see Christendom reunited. Furthermore he was by temperament a high churchman, and he put the full weight of his authority behind Archbishop Laud, whose emphasis on ritual and formalism seemed, to those of a different persuasion, to be closer in spirit to Rome than to Geneva.

It was Laud's attempt to force a new prayer-book on Scotland that sparked off the revolt which led to the collapse of the personal rule. Con and the Queen seized this opportunity to demonstrate the goodwill of the Catholic community at home and abroad, to contrast to the disloyalty of the Scottish Covenanters and their Puritan sympathizers south of the border. English Catholics contributed thousands of pounds towards the cost of raising a royal army to suppress the revolt, while both Spain and the Papacy offered substantial loans to Charles in return for appropriate concessions. As the crisis deepened the negotiations became more frenzied and the proposed solutions more extreme. The King could have tried to unite the nation behind him by summoning a parliament, but he delayed doing so for fear that the price of parliamentary support would be the dismantling of Laudianism. As a result, he was left at the mercy of Catholic elements which were quite

prepared to use force and welcomed the prospect of establishing an autocratic monarchy in England as a prelude to reunion with Rome. It was their activities, with or without the King's knowledge and approval, which provided substance for belief in the existence of a popish plot.

Yet such a belief was not solely a product of the Scottish crisis, and it is a weakness of Caroline Hibbard's otherwise admirable book that its range is so narrow. Apprehension about the growth of papist influence at court went back at least to the 1620s, when it was focused upon the royal favourite, Buckingham. And the conviction that time was running out, that England must commit herself unequivocally to the holy war against the papal Antichrist, had an even longer pedigree. Anti-Catholicism was not at the periphery of English public life but at its heart and centre, for as Secretary Nicholas reminded his royal master in 1641, "the heart of an intention to introduce popery was that which first brought into dislike with the people the government both of the church and commonwealth."

The first volume of a new yearbook, *Parliamentary History* (281pp, Gloucester: Also Sutton: 0 85299 013 0) includes articles and reviews by Helen Miller, Geoffrey Hiplines and Clive Jones, Philip Lawson, Norman Cash, J. R. Vincent and by the yearbook's editor Eveline Cruickshanks.

The Faith of the Old Testament: A History
Translated by John Sturdy
302pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0 631 13177 9

Schmidt's work was first published in 1968, this translation being of the 1982 fourth edition. It accordingly reflects the general uncertainty of current Old Testament scholarship following the

ways illuminating. Israel's faith is seen as creatively facing new historical situations while at the same time being tenacious of her past. It is a process of continuity and discontinuity as she works her way from slavery

Anglicans could conspicuously identify the Roman Church with the scarlet woman. These robust attitudes gave a certain zest to controversy, but the de-

The day is long past when John Henry Newman could write of the Church of his baptism that "the thought of the Anglican service makes me shiver, and the thought of the Thirty-nine Articles makes me shudder," when Cardinal Wiseman could only visualize the conversion of England, for which he fervently prayed, in terms of "submission to Rome, or when pious Anglicans could complicitly identify the Roman Church with the scariest woman. These robust attitudes gave a certain zest to controversy, but the de-

McAdoo discusses the work of the two inter-Church Commissions, showing where agreement has been reached and indicating areas where problems and difficulties still prevail.

in relation to the other two, the "mystical" and the "scientific" opposites, the relation between connection and disjunction — to both physical and psychical phenomena. These ideas are often labelled "mystical"; not because they do not apply to the material world, but because scientists, during the modern-historical period, chose to adopt a scheme for understanding the world under which such ideas became formally incomprehensible. But Coleridge, one suspects, did not want them to be comprehensible: "mystical" or not, he was inclined to be a mystic. When he returned from giving a lecture to the Royal Society of Literature, ostensibly on the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus (Coleridge had characteristically chosen the most problematic work in the history of Western literature), he wrote to John Taylor Coleridge that he "inflicted" that whole Essay (an hour and 25M) on the ears of the R.L.S., with most remorseful sympathy with their audience, who could not possibly understand the 10th part". Take this as his conclusion with the extraordinary episode in the *Biographia Literaria* where Coleridge interrupts himself practically in mid-sentence, with a letter from "a friend", advising him to continue with the topic which he has just said his readers would similarly have no

the relation between poetry and metre; or "intussusception", the subsuming of one organic substance into another. Corrigan leaves the meaning of these terms, and their usefulness to Coleridge, unexplained; nor does he suggest how such a use of scientific terms fits into his own scheme. For Coleridge, science was the substantiation of poetry, as poetry was the etherializing of science, these complementary terms being the result of the same reality. As a result neither could be said to have precedence in shaping it. The scientific term here is a merely local vehicle, with a specific, limited meaning, serving as a useful image of a poetic or philosophical process. It cannot be said to shape Coleridge's understanding.

Coleridge also used scientific terms of a quite different kind, terms such as "polarity" or "magnetism". Again Corrigan is not specific, but it appears to be terms of this kind which underlie his thesis. Yet it is far from clear that they work in the way that Corrigan suggests. The meanings which Coleridge attached to such terms were personal; they were part of a cohesive philosophy which he derived from his study of Shakespeare and from his own musings, none the more, on the human passions, and the annihilation of time and space, and the immobility

linear causation, follows from his understanding of literature. One could even say that the germ of his electrical theory of matter lay in the plays of Shakespeare.

Coleridge's concept of polarity, far from being a given of contemporary science, was used by him to build a bulwark against what he considered to be its more insidious precepts — against, for example, Dalton's atomism. All the same he recognized the formidable power of his opponents, and this led to something with which we have become familiar: the clothing of his facts in the habits of science. Thus his elaborate terminology, with its air of technical exactness, the endless ethereal distinctions and displacements, are a sort of parody (whether conscious or unconscious) of the scientific process; while his message is, in reality, revolutionary, going far beyond the imaginations of the scientists of the age.

Corrigan pays lip-service to those critics for whom it is an orthodoxy that language determines the possibilities of experience. For themselves it must be true; all the more necessary it is, about the things men enjoy to expose. For the game is a dangerous one to play if one does not have the cunning of Coleridge himself.

feeling as if it existed, ruthless suppression in the formal entry: "most readers Hogg remains the author of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and though these stories will not all be in that situation, they have their own (faintly repellent) interest.

The common thread is a fascination with guilt, fences, revenge, preoccupation. Aims are very different, but a constant and mysterious death, mangled corpses discovered by the roadside, with the countenance frozen in an aspect of terror, Revenanta step back into the narrative, as if they were called to life again by the scent of Hogg's ink. *Doppelgänger* double up the tales. The scene is always Ettrick, Annandale or Nithdale: except in the opening item, "Storms" (recalling the harsh winter of 1794 in the Yarrow valley), there is surprisingly little sense of the landscape. The adventures are set in the classes into which he divided the *Shepherd's Calendar*. It is a scheme as replace with potential for anomaly and overlap as the taxonomy which Wordsworth devised for his own

One of the disappointed visitors to the Border country was Washington Irving, who found Tweed "a naked stream" and the surrounding landscape "a bare succession of gray, monotonous hills." He thought it had taken special genius on the part of Scott, above, to tell the romance of the region. E. V. "Rip Van Winkle" belongs to the identical literary moment of the stories by Hogg, and in the description of Ichabod Crane — "No tale was told of grass or monstrous for his capacity of swallow" — we see the ideal reader of the tales. They are puritan variations on an age-old pagan theme.

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Coleridge, Language, and Criticism
217pp. Athens: University of
Georgia Press (distributed in the UK
and on the Continent by Eurospan) \$15
0 8203 0593 6

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Familiar Anecdotes of Walter Scott. In middle life Hogg had experienced considerable financial difficulty, and he drifts sadly in and out of Scott's *Journal* ("Poor James Hogg sinking under the times" – felt that feeling, if it existed, ruthlessly suppressed in the formal entry). The most readers Hogg remains the author of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and that is the only novel that is not about that situation, they have their own (faintly repellent) interest.

The common thread is a fascination with gain, greed, revenge, private obsession. Almost every story contains a violent and mysterious death, mangled corpses discovered by the roadside, with the countenance frozen in an aspect of terror. Revenge starts back into the narrative, as if they were called to life again by the scent of Hogg's ink. *Doppelgänger* double up the tales. The scene is always Ettrick, Annandale or Nithdale; except in the opening time, "Storms" (recalling the harsh winter of 1794 in the Valley of the lakes), (there is surely a hint of the valley's rapid rise). Hogg invents a series of classes in which he divides the *Shepherd's Calendar*. It is a scheme as replete with potential for anomalous and overlap as the taxonomy which Wordsworth devised for his own

... his wife, nor his daughter all
yet it so fell out, and a very painful
circumstance, that the latter was
not to inherit the sufferer, who was
the most hardily bested of them
... It was merely for want of bread
that Robin was forced to die.
Though the language has salt a
savour, ("gabberluange," "grim-
purly"), *Hogg* seldom achieves the
Scottish richness which be aims for.
"Wandering Willie's Tale" from
Redgumtree is a model for the latter
times, when the author is at his
unfetterable: "I, think aye, un-
parabollical the tale," said Tibby to
his grandmother, "what makes her be-
gate?" Elsewhere the technique is le-
ss assured: a tale called "Sound Morality"
opens with a dialogue between two
shepherds, one anglicized, the other
broad Scots. But the latter tells his
subsequent fable in the most genteel
prose, and only at the end does *Hogg*
restore him to his dialect.

Douglas Mack supplies a useful
glossary together with full details of
publishing history and textual variants.
His notes are a little sparing on point-
ing needed elucidation: archaic usage
such as "particular" for "peculiar"
odd, for example, the latter assumption
perhaps illegitimate. The editor assumes
too much too much help with historic
references. But this is taken too far.

Companion to Charles Lamb: A
Guide to People and Places 1760-
1847
392pp. Mansell. £18.95.
0 7201 1657 0

Like Dickens, Charles Lamb has often been taken to represent a certain kind of conservatism. Since the turn of the century there has been a Dickens revival, but comparatively little enthusiasm for his work with literature. A Charles Lamb Society, aimed in part at promoting good humour, was not formed until 1935, but Lamb had a thriving unofficial fan club long before this. Charles Lamb dinners and get-togethers stretch back into the last century. His circle and his events are part of his gentility and commonpolicies, had quickly become commonplaces of literary anecdote while in his lifetime.

Claude A. France's *Companion to Charles Lamb* sets out to enter the alphabetically ordered every thing and everybody in any way connected with Lamb's life and, as were, afterlife. If there are any bookish or bookmen concerned with Lamb no mention here, it is probably not from want of zeal on France's part. He is able to reveal a number of examples, from the 19th and 1946 three Charles Lamb Brains Trusts were held. But while he has a gimlet eye for minutiae he can be curiously neglectful in other respects. Neither Dickens nor Thackeray has an entry, though both were among the most notable of Lamb's Victorian associates; and the affinities between the labyrinthine elements in their work and to Lamb might be worth considering.

Despite such puzzling omissions, the *Guide* has the virtue of showing how much of Lamb has been

The real trouble with the *Guide* is that it is not informed by any critical principle. A lyro Lamb reader who wanted to identify the central texts by and about Lamb would meet with rapid defeat. The bibliographer veers toward the indiscriminate, most items being equally weighted. For example, the entry for P. P. Howe, the Hazlitt scholar and biographer, cites "a 700-page contribution of 1935 entitled 'Lamb and Hazlitt'." No indication is given that this is a short letter hardly worth turning up. We are told that Thomas Holcroft had a phenomenal memory

We are not, however, given the full illustration of his powers of recall — memorializing in Paris, and subsequently pirating in London, of *Figaro*. A notable entry refers cryptically to Lamb's *frappas* about Gilbert Wakefield. From a check to Gilbert Wakefield. Nothing.

Disturbance and hard drinking do not feature significantly in the book, yet they were not trivial features of Lamb's life, and perhaps they should have had their own entries. His eldest Mary, whose guardianship he became committed to, and even if we were not known that Lamb himself had been briefly institutionalized, his writing on Jacobean drama alone would imply personal knowledge of the violent and irrational. His humdrum clerical job at East India House was, perhaps, a remedy for hysteria. At events, the Jocosse, Sirinde Lamb, far as he existed, must be self against Lamb whose life belonged to the Gothic mode. This Lamb, the sufferer who was strong, and in some degree still, may not sound an attractive companion. Not surprisingly Lamb's hagiographers ignore him.

Adam Smith, even the
some time as high as the
Coventry". Not even in Edinburgh
not even among members of the
Association for Scottish Literary
Studies (who sponsor this volume)
may everyone instantly pick up the
reference to the agronomist Andrew
Coventry. The editor could have
spared me, and other readers, the
bother of looking it up.

One of the disappointed visitors
to the Border country was Washington
Irving, who found the landscape
structures and surrounding lands
are a succession of gray, monotonous
hills. He thought it had taken spe-
cimens on the part of Scott, above
to sell the romance of the region. E-
"Rip Van Winkle" belongs to a
identical literary moment of the
stories by Hogg, and in the description
of Ichabod Crane - "No tale was so
gross or monstrous, for the tale
was the ideal reader, and the
the tales. They are puritan variations
on an age-old pagan theme.

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Clouded Witness: Initiation in the Church of England in the Mid-Victorian Period 1850-1875
223pp. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick (distributed in the UK by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh). £10.50.
0 915138 51 4

Taking as his starting-point the most famous liturgical controversy of the nineteenth century—the Gorham Judgment of 1850, which sent Henry Edward Gorham, a young and brilliant later Cardinal, Manning, to Rome and made Mr Gladstone exclaim that the Church of England was lost unless it repudiated its Jesper survivors, in a number of short sections, various matters concerning baptism and confirmation in the period up to 1875. Many of the problems seem to have stemmed from the changing position of the Church of England within society, indicated by the Religious Census of 1851, which showed clearly that Church and Nation were no longer coterminous; as well as from "party"

children baptized at Church of England fonts. He also highlights the problem many, especially working-class people, found in obtaining the more substantial sponsors required by Canon XXIX, and the debate surrounding its revision which proved abortive.

Interesting comments are also made about the actual administration of the sacraments. Touching the head of a child with yet finger or sprinkling with a brush, the ways arranged around the consumption of wine, irregularities which seem to have been limited only to a small minority. Manning was not the only Anglican who felt such carelessness justified in question the validity of baptism in the Church of England.

1812 opened wounds which festered into the 1820s and 1830s with a trickle of secessions into dissent which might have become a small flood had theological definition been forced upon the Church before mid-century.

But these are small quibbles. As Geoffrey Cuming, the dean of Anglican liturgical historians, writes in a foreword, 'Mr Jagger has chosen an unthinned field'. The scope of this book is inevitably limited. The author has already placed us in his debt by editing two collections of baptismal liturgies. It is to be hoped that this present work, blending history, liturgy and doctrine, will stimulate others to explore the overlap between ecclesiastical history, social history and historical theology.

bled among others who managed to hold on to their preferences during years that saw "Henry VIII's six books, the Edwardian Prayer book, the Marian reaction and the Elizabethan religious settlement . . . cracker, clanger, and yaffle lot contrasted sharply with the happy lot of those, whether, Papist or Anglican, whose consciences were less accommodating."

Archbishop McAdoo links the two foregoing papers to his survey of recent ecumenical progress by a discussion of the correspondence between Archbishop Wake and the French theologian Louis de Pin in the early eighteenth century, and the early talks held by the second Viscount Halifax and the Abbe Portal in 1890. These talks during which the con-

of East Anglia) of the subject. The next step, it must be said, is for a limited communication *in sparis* (which already exists between Rome and the Anglican Churches), but *Apostolicum* can still lie like a log across the way to inter-communion. In spite of the assurance that the issues behind the differences are not as deep as they are now "put in a past context" by contemporary doctrinal attitudes to the priesthood among Catholics and theologians. Notwithstanding, the problems still at issue the essay leaves the reader with a feeling of hope for the future, and a respect for the representatives of the two Churches who have worked so harmoniously and purposefully together for the past fifteen years.

1847
392p. Mammell. £18.95.
0 7201 1657 0

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